

tion which has led to this discussion have been based. The country is well aware of the effects of the liquor traffic upon all the interests concerned in Canada. We require no expensive Royal Commission to sit one or two years to lay these facts before the Legislature; the country is well aware as to the measures which have been adopted in this and other countries with a view to lessen, regulate, or prohibit the traffic. An expensive Royal Commission paid by the people of this country to gather facts already in their possession will not add anything to the educational influences which are already before the people in connection with this subject, and so every conclusion which has been suggested by the mover of this amendment has already been settled by committees of this Legislature, by the able addresses which have been delivered in Parliament during the past fifteen years, by the vast amount of literature which has been poured forth by the press of Canada during the past quarter of a century on this subject and which is within the reach of every person within this Dominion. But, Sir, assuming that we have an expensive Royal Commission, that we have half a dozen gentlemen roaming throughout this country and other countries, we have at the end of this period a bulky report circulated at immense expense, interesting I grant you and replete with valuable information—but the main question is left precisely in the position it is now in after the lapse of two or three years. The Government will still be groping in the darkness for some practical means to carry into effect the will of the people, and to pass a prohibitory liquor law which, according to the arguments of the hon. the Minister of Finance himself, will be of incalculable benefit to every man and to every interest in this country. I say, Sir, it is a lame and impotent means of evading a direct pronouncement upon this question, and if it is carried into effect we will be in precisely the same position two years hence as we are to-night. The question of a plebiscite will still be open for discussion and consideration, the probability of a prohibitory liquor law being enforced by the people of the country will still be open for debate, and after years of delay and a heavy expenditure of public money we will not have advanced one step in the matter. I think it would be more manly and more in accordance with the disposition this Parliament has manifested in treating other subjects, that the representatives of the people in this House should vote at once either for or against the principle of prohibition. As there are large numbers of members in this House who have some doubts as to whether the electorate of the country is in favour, by a large majority, of prohibition, the Legislature to-night, or as soon as practicable, should come to a conclusion as to whether they should submit this question to a plebiscite or otherwise. Personally, I am opposed—and chiefly for the reasons given by the Minister of Finance—to the idea of putting this question before the people by a plebiscite or referendum. The reasons I have given against the appointment of a Royal Commission will apply to this also. After having placed the question before the people, after having referred it to the people at the polls, suppose the people have given a substantial yea to the question thus submitted to them, the Legislature will find itself in precisely the same position it is in to-night, as to how best to deal with this question, and the personal feelings or

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political proclivities of some hon. gentlemen will still be bound to interfere with the carrying into effect of a strong and reasonable and practical prohibitory law. I think it would be far better than all ulterior questions should be laid aside and that Parliament should, at as early a date as possible, decide on the principles of prohibition and leave in the hands of the Government or other competent authority the framing of a prohibitory law. I agree with what has been well said by the hon. mover of the resolution (Mr. Jamieson), that it is not the desire of the temperance people of this country, who are forcing forward with the utmost energy they can bring the necessity of a prohibitory liquor law, it is not their desire to bring that about in such a way as to destroy or injure suddenly any great interest connected with this question.

Mr. MONTAGUE. Was not that a subject of discussion in the Alliance whose resolution this is? Was not the question of the Legislature dealing with immediate prohibition the subject of discussion in that Alliance, and was not this resolution framed by the Alliance as a hard and fast resolution for immediate prohibition?

Mr. FLINT. I believe the resolution of the hon. member for North Lanark (Mr. Jamieson) was a resolution suggested to him by the Alliance, but even if it had not been suggested to him by the Alliance—

Mr. MONTAGUE. Then let me say it is the resolution we are voting on, not the hon. gentleman's opinion.

Mr. FLINT. I am speaking now in regard to the whole question rather than to the amendment of the hon. Minister of Finance. I was saying that assuming that on a plebiscite the people would show themselves in favour of the law, we would then be in precisely the position we are in at the present time with regard to taking any practical steps to carry out the will of the people; and I think that, even at the expense of some delay, it would be better that Parliament itself should come to the conclusion to enact a prohibitory liquor law; then the Government would be required by Parliament and the opinion of the country to enforce it as they do any other law on the Statute-book. I am not disposed to admit that the question of prohibition is so different from any of the other great questions of legislation as to be treated in any exceptional manner. However, the question has been so fully dealt with by the hon. Minister of Finance and the other hon. gentlemen who have spoken, that it would be unfair to the House for me to dwell any further upon it at this hour, and I will only conclude by saying that I trust that the resolution of the hon. Minister will not be accepted by the House, but that we shall reach some definite conclusion on the main question, or on some collateral question more closely connected with it than is suggested by a proposal for a plebiscite, a commission or anything of that kind. I am strongly opposed to the amendment.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I wish to say a word or two before the motion of the hon. Minister of Finance is voted upon by the House. With regard to that motion, I entirely concur in the remark of my hon. friend beside me, that it is wholly beside the speech which the hon. Minister addressed to the House. That hon. gentleman proposes that the