

partial prohibition of the liquor traffic, that if and when it shall be adjudged by such judicial tribunal that the Legislature has power to enact such a law this House will be prepared to consider and decide upon any measure in that behalf which may be brought before it; that for reasons aforesaid this House is of the opinion that the question of the prohibition of the liquor traffic by the Provincial Legislature should not be further dealt with during the present session, save and except to make and enact all necessary provision for securing a provincial plebiscite on the question of the prohibition of the said traffic, and this House accordingly orders that the said bill be not now read a second time, but be read a second time this day six months.

Strange how these accidents will happen! Strange how great and serious questions may be dealt with in the most deliberately trifling manner when the actors dealing with them keep long and steady countenances. Now, sir, the hon. gentleman then introduced something which he must have been very sorry for since, viz., that fearful and wonderful provision called a plebiscite, and the hon. gentleman I believe, has oftentimes since regretted that he ever touched the plebiscite or had anything to do with the unclean thing; and I don't wonder, sir, at his disgust, although we may imagine sometimes, even against our better common sense, that we are entertaining an angel unaware, my hon. friend did not look forward as he ought to have done; he thought the people who had allowed him to stumble for sixteen years in relation to the discussion of this great question would not care particularly what took place with reference to it in the future, and he little dreamed when he advocated the plebiscite in 1893 that Nemesis would come home to him with the thing called the referendum. (Opposition cheers.)

MR. ROSS' FORMER DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT BILL

Let me quote my hon. friend again—and I will say this for him, and it ought to be said for him, that when he makes a statement which is taken down and printed you will always find that what the statement was intended to mean is pretty clearly expressed—here is what my hon. friend said on this debate on the second reading, which he succeeded in shutting off as he had succeeded sixteen years before in shutting off the proposed legislation of Dr. Schultz:

What we propose to ask is not, shall we prohibit the retail sale of intoxicating liquors, that would be but a small matter, the bar-rooms are bad enough God knows, but they are not as bad as the canteen in the private homes. While the retail traffic was prohibited there would be permitted that wholesale traffic which would result in a man carrying his demijohn home by night and drinking it with his wife at his own fireside. (Opposition cheers.)

And, sir, what was the hon. gentleman describing in these words? He was describing word for word, line for line and letter for letter the bill, the second reading of which he had moved to-day (Opposition cheers); the bill the second reading of which he moved to-day, and for which he dare not assume the responsibility, constitutionally speaking, is practically the bill introduced by my friend from North Toronto (Mr. Marter), which he describes truthfully in the language I have just quoted here. Now, sir, let us go on a little further. In 1893, sixteen years had passed of this long waiting in the wilderness, and then we had in 1895, and I do not wish to go into a very detailed history of that, the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and nothing was done upon it. There are people who say that it was impossible to say what the meaning of the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was. Well, sir, if I were the leader of the Government of the Province of Ontario I would not wait for the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England to tell me what their meaning was, I should submit it to the people and stand or fall by it. (Opposition cheers.)