

for that action: until there is not only an evident desire on the part of the country for prohibition, but also that the country should be prepared to sustain the prohibitory measure and to assist in carrying it out. I believe this is, to a certain extent, true: but I believe also, that one of the very best means of obtaining that happy period in the country's history is to commence by prohibiting. I believe that the very fact that a prohibitory law is in existence is one of the very best educating powers in the community. I believe that, by the legislative action of the Parliament, we may have a better influence upon the people of the country to bring them to that opinion than we can in any other way whatever."

What then is the use of a Royal Commission? The hon. gentleman continued:

"It is true that in years past moral suasion has been tried, and moral suasion has accomplished a great deal. Far be it from me in any way to detract from the noble efforts of those who have spent their time and labour in trying to improve the principles of the community upon this question, but I believe that, in conjunction with moral suasion, as an assistant and help to moral suasion, it is absolutely necessary that the Government of the country should propose a law, and should assist those who are trying this moral suasion to carry out that law and to enforce it. What has been the result in those countries where we have a prohibitory law? We find universal testimony to the fact that in those states and countries where the prohibitory law has been in existence the people have found the education which it exerted upon the community was the very greatest possible to be imagined."

The hon. gentleman then went on to speak of the effect of the prohibitory laws in some of these states. However, I will venture to give only another extract from the hon. gentleman's speech delivered in 1884. He said further:

"But there is another argument which we may fairly adduce. It is very inconsistent for the Government of any country to license people to sell intoxicants, and thereby encourage intemperance, while at the same time they pretend to be educating people in favour of temperance. Certainly it is a very ineffectual mode of educating people in favour of temperance by precept, when by practice the Government educate people in favour of intemperance. So long as we may be told that the liquor traffic is perfectly respectable, that it is acknowledged and fostered by the Government, that traffic cannot possibly be considered disreputable, or immoral, or wrong. It is very difficult for us to preach when we do not practice, and I think, Sir, that it is the duty of the representatives of the people to take the first step in practising that which they are endeavouring to preach to the people."

"Now there is another objection very often urged against prohibition, and that is that prohibitory legislation cannot succeed, and must necessarily be ineffective, and conducive rather to evil than to good. I believe we have not to go outside the limits of our own country to see the fallacy of this argument. I come from a county in which a prohibitory liquor law has been in existence for a long time, and I can emphatically say that, while it has not accomplished all that we desire it should accomplish, while it has not been absolutely and entirely enforced, still it has accomplished so much good that the vast mass of the people in that county would regret exceedingly to see it repealed. Nay, more, they would strenuously resist and forbid the repeal of that law, and any agitation in favour of such repeal would meet with a most determined opposition. I think I am justified in saying this when I recall the fact that the other day I presented to this House a petition signed by 1,200 or 1,500 of the electors of my county, asking that this resolution, in favour of which I am now speaking, should be passed by this House. If the Dunkin Act, which has been for many years in existence in my county, had been inoperative, if it had produced more evil than good, if it had not, at all events, accomplished some of the good which was expected of it, it would have been quite impossible that so large a number of the most intelligent electors in my county should have asked for the passage of a resolution in favour of prohibition. Instead of that, they would have sent petitions here asking that the resolution be rejected, pointing out how prohibition had failed in its effect. We know that in a large number of counties in this Dominion the Scott Act also has been in force, and although, no doubt, there are conflicting opinions in regard to its action, still the simple fact remains, that in every district I know of where this law is in force, the liquor-sellers and those who wish to obtain liquor, together with the manufacturers of such liquor, are opposed to such law, is to me a convincing

argument that that law has done harm to the traffic. I believe if we could obtain evidence from these counties where prohibitory laws are in force, the evidence would be overwhelmingly in favour of prohibition."

I beg to remind the House that it was after such utterances as these that the hon. gentleman gave the vote he did give in favour of Mr. Robertson's resolution. He says he gave it in a moment of weakness. Well, he does not do justice to the powerful arguments he used as a reason for giving the vote he did give. Those arguments, I am sure, were convincing to a great number of hon. members who listened to them, and would be equally convincing if repeated to-night. I have felt it to be my duty, as well as my pleasure, to quote the utterances of Mr. Foster, M. P., against the utterances of the Hon. Mr. Foster, Minister of Finance.

Mr. FLINT. We have heard from the Minister of Finance probably one of the most extraordinary confessions ever made in Parliament by a public man, that he voted on an important public question in a moment of weakness and in consequence of appeals made to him by certain parties outside of this Legislature. Is the time coming when we will have another confession from the Minister of Finance, that the resolution now moved by him in this House, was moved by him in a moment of weakness also; that it was the result of a lash of some kind; and that threatened with penalties inside of this House or outside of this House he has put forward this motion? Comparing the motion made by the Minister of Finance on this important subject with the speeches with which he has ornamented the question of prohibition during the last fifteen or twenty years, I think that we will see that a great change has come over the spirit of his dream and that some motive—I will not attribute any improper motive to him—but some motive of an extraordinary character must have influenced a man of his character and position in this country to take the extraordinary stand he has taken on this question to-night? What are the conclusions the Minister of Finance lead us to? We find the country agitated from one end to the other on a question of great economic and moral importance; we find the Table of this House overwhelmed and overburdened with petitions upon this question, asking the House to take certain action with regard to the passage of a prohibitory law; we find certain amendments suggested to the House by representatives of the people, one looking to a vote of the people on this question and another looking towards an enquiry upon the subject. And, after the able speech, the eloquent speech, and the powerful speech delivered by the hon. Minister of Finance, as that hon. gentleman is always able to deliver, and for which he has no greater admirer than myself, we find he has simply adopted in another form an amendment of one of his supporters and looking to the same end. I will make some practical criticism upon the speech of the Minister of Finance which I submit to the consideration of the House. In the first place, we are to be treated to delay, we are to be treated to a costly commission to gather facts which have already been gathered, facts which the hon. gentleman himself has given to the public, facts which are within the reach of every member of this House who wishes to make any effort to gather them, facts which are well known from one end of the country to the other, and facts upon which the whole prohibitory agita-