

through his speech the other day that he only read extracts from the authorities he quoted. Sir John Bourinot was here five days consulting with the honorable gentleman—

Hon. G. W. Ross—No.

Mr. Whitney—I say, yes.

Hon. G. W. Ross—I say no. I shall call the honorable gentleman to order I have not spoken to Sir John Bourinot. I think, within twelve months.

Mr. Whitney—I say that Sir John Bourinot was here the most of five days on the business which my honorable friend refers to.

Mr. Ross—I must contradict my honorable friend; he was not here on that business. There passed two letters, one to Sir John Bourinot, and the other to me. I have not seen him nor spoken to him, nor did I know he was in the city.

Mr. Whitney—I do not contradict my honorable friend, and I will go right back now to what I said. In every case of citation by the honorable gentleman (Hon. G. W. Ross) he does not read the whole opinion, and in the case of Sir John Bourinot he does not read one word or letter or syllable which says that his referendum is constitutional. (Opposition cheers.) Who, that knows the place that Sir John Bourinot occupies in the ranks of constitutionalists would expect anything else? Sir John Bourinot in all the extracts quoted by the honorable gentleman goes no further than to say something like this, that the idea has progressed, that it is very likely one of those vexed questions which might be taken from out the quarrels of Parliamentary Government or Parliamentary contention, but, sir, in order to make sure just let me see what Sir John Bourinot says:—

“While the plebiscite may be compared to the Swiss initiative which gives the right to the electors to move the legislative bodies to take up and consider any subject of public interest, the referendum which is also borrowed from the same country, has been also suggested on several occasions as a desirable and efficient manner of bringing into force a measure which can only be successful when it obtains the unequivocal support of a large majority of the people interested in its provisions. This democratic feature of the Swiss political system may be compared with the practice that already exists in Canada of referring certain by-laws of municipal bodies to the vote of the ratepayers, of giving to the people in a district the opportunity of accepting or rejecting the Canadian Temperance Act, of permitting a majority of the ratepayers in a municipal division to establish a free library at the public expense, etc.”

As far as I have heard the quotation from Sir John Bourinot given by my honorable friend there is not one word with regard to the constitutionality of the referendum, and how could there be? The referendum is in direct antagonism to the principles of our system of Cabinet Government.

Hon. G. W. Ross—I will read this quotation from Sir John Bourinot:

As far as the Crown can, at any moment, exercise its undoubted prerogative of dissolution in order to obtain an expression of general opinion on a popular vote, so it can use the referendum under the authority of the Legislature as a direct means of ascertaining the popular will on a special measure of grave importance. (Government cheers.)

Mr. Whitney—I still say Sir John Bourinot does not declare that the referendum is constitutional. (Opposition cheers.) And in the face of the great constitutional associates of his who sit opposite I will maintain my word here and hereafter. Sir John Bourinot does not say distinctly whether this Legislature may not pass a vote to do one of two very different things, that is altogether a different question from asserting that the referendum as proposed by my honorable friend is constitutional in this country and under our