

been called into existence by Parliament or by this House shall be the base on which the vote is taken. Why, Sir, it is only common sense, and the Prime Minister falls into what I cannot help characterizing as a piece of buncombe unworthy of one of his high position, when he comes forward and attempts to make a piece of platform claptrap by a reference to the Senate. Is it to be supposed that this House is so degraded that any Government is in the position to declare, before a Bill has been considered in committee, that as sure as fate it is going to pass. One of the Quebec newspapers described the right hon. Prime Minister as telling his followers in Room 16 that whether they are right or wrong he is going to hold his head. The hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte) laughs. Would he prefer that I gave the description of the First Minister which the hon. gentleman himself gave of him, namely that he was a man who is venerated all over and absolutely without principle? The right hon. gentleman is assuming to-day the attitude that, according to truthful chronicles from that caucus, he assumed when he told his followers that he was going to have his head no matter whether his followers thought he was right or wrong. But he cannot have his way in this House without convincing this House that he is right. I need not suppose that because he has a big majority behind him, if a Bill is found on discussion to be a piece of legislation that it is neither in the interests of this country nor in the dignity of this Parliament, to pass, this Parliament has fallen so low that it will pass at his dictation, such a Bill. I hope Parliament has not fallen that low. This exhibition of temper, in reply to the fair comment as made by my hon. friend behind me on the Bill brought forward by a colleague of the right hon. First Minister, was unworthy of the Minister, most unworthy of his past record, and most unworthy of his present high position.

Mr. CRAIG. I merely rise to put a question concerning this proposed measure. As my hon. friend from York (Mr. Foster) said a few minutes ago, it will cost a great deal of money, and no doubt a great deal of trouble will be taken by the temperance people to see that the friends of prohibition record their vote. The suggestion is most opportune that before we spend any more time on this Bill we should have the assurance from the right hon. First Minister that if a majority is recorded in favour of prohibition, the Government pledges itself to bring in a prohibitory Bill. Another most important point on which we should be informed is this—whether the Government will require a majority of the votes recorded or a majority of voters on the lists before they feel called on to bring in a prohibitory Bill. These are two most important questions, and temperance people would be greatly obliged

Mr. DAVIN.

to the hon. First Minister if he will answer them, and let us know where we stand—whether a majority of votes will be sufficient or whether a majority of the voters will be required before the Government pass a prohibitory Bill, and whether they will pledge themselves, in case there is such a majority, to pass it.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). The Franchise Acts of the provinces, according to this Bill, are those on which the voting will take place. In Ontario the franchise law provides that before an election, there shall be a registration of the voters in the towns and cities. Is it intended that before this proposition is submitted to the people, there shall be in all the towns and cities where that law now prevails a registration of the voters?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. (Mr. Fisher). That point is provided for in the Franchise Bill before the House, the terms of which will apply to this election, just as if it were an election for the House of Commons.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). That simply means that the Government will not be able for some months to submit the proposition to the people, as there would have to be a registration in the towns and cities of Ontario previously.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. My impression is that the Franchise Bill provides that if a year has expired between the registration in cities and towns in Ontario and the date of another election, a new registration would have to be made; but if it has not, the last registration would be taken and acted upon.

Mr. McNEILL. I just wish to say that it seems to me the criticisms of my hon. friend beside me on this Bill were perfectly well taken, and I rise to enter my protest, as strongly as I can, against the position taken by the Government. I think that it is not short of insult to the House of Commons for the members of the Government, one after another to declare in this House that they are determined that a Bill shall pass which has not been fully discussed in this House. It is equivalent to saying either that their followers are impervious to any argument that may be adduced, or that no matter how completely convinced they may be that the Bill ought not to pass, the Government have the power to make them pass it. My hon. friend (Mr. Fisher) shakes his head. If he will be good enough to show me how it is possible to explain in any other way the position that the Government has taken I shall be very glad to hear of it. But I repeat I cannot understand how any Government can have the assurance to declare in this House that a Bill shall pass, which has not been discussed at all in committee, except on the supposition I have referred to,