

rests with regard to these various questions. It is a matter very well known, I have no doubt, to many hon. gentlemen that there are several cases which have been tested before the courts of highest jurisdiction in Ontario and Quebec, and they have confirmed the theory that the power to issue licenses, and everything incidental to the licenses, rests with the local legislature.

A case is now pending before the Supreme Court in which that very issue arises, and, therefore, it would have been very much better if a special case could have been so framed, and no doubt it could have been readily done, and referred to the Privy Council, because it is manifest that this legislation cannot be acceptable to a very large proportion of the people of Canada. I venture to say that the majority of the people, although not the majority in the sense in which we are accustomed to interpret majorities, because the majority have spoken the other way, but the masses would be disposed to vote, irrespective of political questions, that the authority with respect to licenses should continue to remain, should continue to be where it always was, with the Local Legislatures.

This Bill comes to us with 140 odd sections and an innumerable quantity of sub-sections, and of course it would be idle for us to attempt to analyze it, because it contains many features of detail, each of which is of sufficient importance to warrant our giving it very careful consideration at this period of the session, with the announcement already made that we are to prorogue to-morrow, and it would be idle to attempt to discuss the several clauses of the Bill. I do not propose, myself, to take any special exception to any of them, leaving it to the Government that has assumed the responsibility of dealing with this question. It would be an unfortunate thing too were we to interject amendments here and there in a measure of this kind. It has no doubt had the attention of some very excellent minds, and it would be rather unfortunate were we just now to throw in alterations and changes that might involve other clauses in obscurity and doubt, and I therefore do not propose, nor do I think it would be wise for the House, to interfere with any of the details of it. What I myself propose to do will be on the third reading

to move a resolution in the sense which I have indicated, that this question ought to stand at all events until the issue is satisfactorily decided whether the prerogative of dealing with the subject belongs to the federal or to the local legislatures.

HON. MR. ALEXANDER—I only wish to make the simple observation that this Bill furnishes an amusing commentary upon the manner in which the public affairs of the Dominion are now managed. The Dominion Government do not profess to say that the Local Governments of the different Provinces cannot legislate upon this important question, but what they do say is that the Government of the Province of Ontario appoints license commissioners who used their power for political purposes, and with the view to defeat the Dominion Government. The Dominion Government now steps in and says "we will take the whole power out of the hands of the Local Governments; we will bring in a Bill legislating for all the Provinces of the Dominion." Could there be a more amusing commentary upon the way in which our public affairs are managed both in the Local and the Dominion Governments? Here we have the local and the federal Governments trying to checkmate each other. Who began this party warfare? Was it the clever subtle chieftan of the party which now rules the country? And was the Local Government driven to retaliate by the same tactics? That seems to be the real position of affairs, and thus the Government sends us a Bill of 51 pages within a few hours of the end of the Session. What a farce and how discreditable it must appear to the people, that the battle is chiefly, which party shall rule!

I do not mean to say that the country is not in some respects being properly governed, in regard for instance to the construction of the Pacific Railway, &c., but this warfare should not go on unchecked. It will be said that our public men have no patriotism—that their chief object is not the public good but the love of office and its spoils. Now the people of this country do not deserve that their public men should lay themselves thus open to reflection, and discredit among the people. Such a state of affairs should be discountenanced. This House ought to discourage such proceedings, and