

force of the criticism of the bill lies against the course we have pursued. Have we followed a proper course? Is it a right thing for the Government to trust the people to take a third or fourth step, having already taken two? I propose to trust the people, that is up to that point. The next question which confronted us was, if a prohibitory liquor law was passed what would be the end—for a wise man endeavors to see the end from the beginning, if he can. We know what the end was in the case of local option: it was passed by a large majority. We know the end in every case here of the Scott Act. It was passed in twenty-six counties and two cities, by a large majority. Dr. McKay and I have labored together on the same platform in favor of the Scott Act, and if the enthusiasm of two vigorous men would have made it conclusive, it ought to have been successful. It was not. It was repealed. In the United States prohibition was adopted in sixteen States and repealed in eleven of them. I put it to you as reasonable men, if you were in my place, responsible for the legislation of the country, would you have advanced legislation in favor of partial prohibition where it had been found almost invariably to fail? I don't think one of you would have done so. Having found in the United States a system of voting and basis of legislation which in so many cases—every one except five—has failed, would it not have been the maddest thing for us, the most inexcusable folly for us, to abandon the license laws and project the country into partial prohibition, which would have been repealed when it was found to be working unfavorably, and which would in the meantime place us in a position of turmoil and confusion which, in my opinion, would be very injurious to the temperance cause.

We know the general tone of public opinion in favor of a bare majority, but as public men—you may call us politicians if you like—responsible for law and order, the Government had to deal with still another consideration; and if, as happened in the case of the Scott Act, there was an unusual amount of law-breaking, and if there were serious trouble in making the Scott Act as effective as the license law has been, and if the benefit to the temperance cause, by the suspension of the drinking habits of the people, was not material, as the figures show at least under the Scott Act, then, as I said before, should we submit a measure, which, perhaps, would be more stringent than the Scott Act, on a new basis, or stand by well-established precedents? Our first thought was that we should assume the full responsi-