

Ministry, to criticize his conduct, and I will do so. It appears to me that it is a proper question for me to discuss, and it is a proper question for this House to discuss, and I tell him that it matters not to me what opinions he may entertain of me or of my course in the House. But there is this about it: I believe the people will think that these momentary weak spells which he has are not always momentary, and that they will last for a considerable season; and there are some people in this country who will believe that these weak turns will last as long as he is in the Dominion Cabinet and gets his salary. A great many people will believe that. I think I am quite parliamentary when I say that. He chooses to make imputations against me, I am not going to make imputations against him; but I believe there are some people who will take that view of the case. As to the language in which he refers to the press, as to the sneers that he makes at the *Montreal Witness* which tried to impress this truth upon the country, as to his declaration that he would not allow the press to dictate to him, and as to the terms in which he speaks of the press that endeavours to carry out the principle which he says that he admires, I will leave that with him and them to settle; but I will not allow him, nor will I allow any other member of this House, to get up and make statements about me which are false, which are not correct, as long as I am in this House.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I want to say a few words on the subject which was before the House an hour ago. As regards the question which has just been under debate, I confess I was not able to follow the argument if any, and I shall not attempt to reply. I will only express my regret that the hon. member for Grey (Mr. Landerkin) should have indulged in language which seems to me entirely uncalled for by anything which transpired this evening. I think that hon. member will be willing to admit himself that he is in the habit, I will not say in the habit, but that he occasionally indulges in the practice, of throwing remarks across the House in a loud tone of voice while members on this side are speaking, in a way that is rather disagreeable to a gentleman who desires to carry on his argument to the House without interruption. He did so while the Minister of Finance was speaking, and the Minister of Finance made a retort at the moment which I may not have fully heard, but which I certainly did not interpret in the offensive sense in which the hon. gentleman seems to have received it. I think the hon. gentleman might have regarded it—I certainly did at the moment—as a playful answer to playful badinage on his part, which is very often rather a rough kind of play. I do not intend to say anything more upon this subject than to express regret that this episode has taken place, and that the hon. gentleman has seen fit to resent what was said to him in answer to his interruption in a way that seems to me to have been quite uncalled for. I want now, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words upon the subject under debate, and but a very few words considering the lateness of the hour. For the greater part of the evening, since the Finance Minister resumed his seat, the question which has been dealt with by hon. gentlemen opposite who have endeavoured to answer him, has not been at all pertinent to the resolution moved by the hon. member for

Mr. LANDERKIN.

Lanark (Mr. Jamieson), to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Mackintosh) or to the sub-amendment moved by the Minister of Finance; but the all important question, it would appear from the hon. gentlemen who have spoken, has seemed to be not the merits of prohibition, not the merits of a proposition to make a public enquiry for the information of the people who are eventually to decide this question, but the more important question, overshadowing all others, seems to have been whether inconsistency can be found between the speech of the Minister of Finance this evening and some speech he made at some other time. The first hon. gentleman to criticize his consistency was the leader of the Opposition, against whose remarks I have nothing to say but this, that the friends of the Minister of Finance are quite willing that the contrast shall be made between the speech of the Minister of Finance, which was frankness itself, which stated the views that he held on this question from the time he entered Parliament down to this moment, and admitted an error he had made once, and the speech of the leader of a great party who resumed his seat without daring to express his opinion on this question. I also think we are willing, if I may pass now to one of his supporters, to contrast the record of the Minister of Finance upon this question with the speech and the record of the hon. member for Huntingdon (Mr. Scriver), who resumed his seat after occupying the time of the House, agreeably it is true, because he was reading eloquent passages from the speeches of the Minister of Finance, but who left us in such doubt as to where he was upon the question, that I had to ask three or four members beside me whether he was a temperance man or a friend of the liquor traffic.

Mr. SCRIVER. You will have no doubt when he votes.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I will have no doubt after he votes, and I hope that hon. gentleman who threw a taunt across this House about history repeating itself, will not repeat his own history when I remind him that in 1877 he was afraid to vote that a prohibitory law was the true remedy for the evils of the liquor traffic. A member of this House, in 1877, moved that a prohibitory law was the true remedy for the evils arising from the liquor traffic—that was the first part of it, and the second part of it was that it was the duty of the Government to bring in such a measure. The member for Huntingdon shirked behind the pretext that there was a question before the Supreme Court as to who had power to legislate on the question of prohibition, and he voted that the words "a prohibitory liquor law is the true remedy for the evils of the liquor traffic" be struck out of the resolution. He promises us that we shall know more about how he will vote, so that we shall know more about how he feels than we have ever done since 1877. I desire to offer a few observations with respect to the remarks of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) as regards this question. I entirely agree with him that on a question of such great importance we ought to be certain before coming to a conclusion as to whether public sentiment has reached that point of determination, assuming it to be in favour of prohibition, as to ensure the full enforcement of the Act after it is passed. I agree