

popular habits and tastes and public morality. The Premier must have thought well before giving the promise. He must have come to the conclusion that there was something unworthy of statesmen in paltering longer with a question which had agitated the public for many years, and had been staved off by glittering unrealities. He must have decided that to deal straightforwardly with it and to throw upon the whole people the responsibility of giving a decision was wiser, and certainly more moral, than to try and humbug sincere advocates of prohibition with subterfuges or vague promises.

TIME TO CONSIDER OUR DUTY.

Unquestionably he has taken a great risk; but if his doing so springs from trust in the good sense of the people, as we have a right to suppose, it is high time for us to consider our duty in the premises with all seriousness and calmness. So far as I know, the proposal to enforce prohibition has never yet been submitted by a Government to the votes of any nation in the world. Municipalities, counties, provinces, states, have voted for and have actually tried prohibition; but for a Dominion scattered over half a continent to try it, especially with a boundary line of thousands of miles, on the other side of which it is lawful to import, manufacture and sell, is an experiment that one is tempted to term quixotic.

And yet, judging by the results of votes which have been taken in Manitoba, Ontario, and the Maritime Provinces, the people seem ready to try the experiment. True, a number of electors, not favorable to prohibition, but who dislike the liquor traffic and sympathize with the moral fervor of many who are fighting against it, declined to go to the polls. But this class may take the same attitude when a Dominion prohibitory law is proposed.

Though a sane, we are a young people, and therefore not disinclined to try a big experiment. We feel, with ill-founded confidence, that should it fail it will be quite easy for us to go back to the former state of things, just as in 1884 the Scott Act, carried in nearly the whole of Ontario, was in a few years repealed by majorities larger than those by which it had been carried.

Is this the reason why the great organs of public opinion have as yet said little or nothing on the subject? Or is it because party interests or their own circulation would suffer if they took a decided stand against prohibition? If the former be the reason, they have not considered how much more is involved in Dominion than in local legislation. If the latter, only those who are willing themselves to risk something have the