

THE OPPOSITION POLICY ON THE LIQUOR BILL

In the debate on the second reading of the Bill relating to the liquor traffic, Mr. Whitney, in reply to the Hon. Mr. Ross, spoke as follows :

Mr. Speaker:—It is a matter not unpleasant to the ordinary observer, I apprehend, to notice the jaunty manner in which my honorable friend (Hon. G. W. Ross) approaches the consideration of this question which has occupied his days and nights for I forget how many months past, and find that since the matter was last discussed in this House he has received testimonials, so to speak, of approbation of his legislation from all possible parties in the State. The extreme prohibitionists, my learned friend says, naturally expected something different, and I agree with the honorable gentleman. Those who were in the liquor business thought the bill was an improper bill, and then between the two there was a large group of persons who also thought that perhaps this bill might not be just what was expected, but my honorable friend had the agreeable intelligence to announce to the House that all these classes approve of his bill. (Laughter.) What more has the honorable gentleman to fear? What more has he to hesitate about with reference to any of the details of this bill? My honorable friend can extract sunbeams from cucumbers, on the slightest warning. His cheerfulness reminds me of a gentleman who was once known to be of a very optimistic turn of mind, and the circumstances which surrounded him from time to time had nothing to do with his bearing towards the occurrences which were going on, or with his mental attitude at the time, and so at a funeral one day this gentleman marched into the room where the remains were stationed, and while he noted the expansive expression of sorrow and lamentation which was abroad in the room he felt it his duty to cheer up all and sundry concerned, and out of the fullness of his heart he said, "It is a nice quiet corpse." (Laughter.) So he comes to-day with the echoes of the thunders of the denunciations of the liquor men last night in his ears (applause), with the echoes of the denunciations of the extreme prohibitionists—always excepting Mr. John J. Maclaren, of course—(laughter), and my hon. friend excels Mark Tapley, who, under all conceivable circumstances was determined to be jolly. (Laughter.)

I hope I shall be enabled in the discussion of this question to-day to do so in a reasonable way, and to do so without taking up any larger portion of the time of the House than I reasonably can; and I want to approach the discussion of this question, Mr. Speaker, in the first place in this manner: My conclusion is that in considering the second reading of a bill of this description we find ourselves face to face with a situation of the utmost gravity and seriousness. The situation is grave and serious both because of the nature and possibly far-reaching consequences and effects of the measure we