

by which the Governments of Manitoba and Ontario are now playing to the rum traffic, they may expect to be laughed at—as they ought to be—and to have no influence whatever with Governments or Legislatures. If they will stand up like men and stand together, they can win victories.

I also want to read, because this is the proper place to do so, a letter which appeared in an evening paper in this city several days ago, written by E. Pomeroy, the compiler of this book, by whose efforts we have been enabled to discuss this question intelligently, and from whose statements, as shown in this book, I have been able to show conclusively this afternoon that the positions assumed by the honorable gentleman, each one of them seriatim and in the whole collectively, have not been founded on the facts as expressed by Mr. Pomeroy. Mr. Pomeroy, who is an enthusiast on the subject of the referendum, writes as follows:

The National Direct Legislation League can only regard any development or application of the referendum with pleasure, and its advocacy by a great party like the Liberal party of Canada, and its application to even one great question is a great step in advance. We would be glad to see it applied to all questions, but welcome its application to any. It is with decided approval that we greet the Premier Ross' bill. But there is one important point in that bill which is decidedly wrong. The provision to be enacted—it must have not a majority of those voting on it, but a majority of those casting their votes at some other election—is almost unprecedented in referendums. As long as every voter has the right and opportunity to vote, if he voluntarily absents himself from the polls that action should not affect the result. The decision should be by a majority of those actually voting. As the bill is constituted it counts those who do not vote against the measure. The effect of this will be that those who are opposed to it will stay at home, and then both the measure and the referendum will be discredited because of the small vote. It looks as if this was intended because the poll on the measure is not to be held at the regular time with the other votings, but at a special election when nothing else comes before the people, and when the people are not accustomed to voting. Of course the stay-at-homes will be larger than at the regular time. Another effect of this will be that those in favor of the measure will stay away from the polls at the previous election, in order that the number polled then may be small, thus lessening the majority which will have to be polled on the measure. I should think all the prohibitionists would do this.

The honorable gentleman has taken good care in his bill that that last resort of the prohibitionists, viz., staying away from the polls at the general election, will not have the desired effect.

THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question of compensation, the honorable gentleman has chosen to give that question the go-by. He has not chosen to submit the question of compensation to the people, at the same time with the other question, out of which compensation is an offshoot, and holds it, so to speak, over the heads of the people in the future, with the suggestion that his attitude on the question of compensation may have its uses in the future. What reason could there be, either in law or in morals, I was going to say, but what reason can there be having regard to the dictates of common sense, if the people are to pronounce upon the question of this bill that they should not pronounce on the complicated question which arises out of it? I apprehend no good reasons could be given, and no reason has been shown yet.

THE DEVICE TO PREVENT ABSTENTIONS.

With regard to the number of votes required in order to carry this bill, a more or less hurried consideration by myself of the figures at the last general election, which as I understand now is to be the test of the vote for this bill, is as follows: At the last general election, roughly speaking, there were 432,000 votes polled; in order to carry this bill it will be necessary that 216,000 votes be polled in its favor. At the last Dominion plebiscite the figures show the votes polled in favor of prohibition were 154,000 in round numbers, so that in order to carry this bill at the referendum