

time, and be cast aside by those who gave it their support. We, therefore, insist upon one-half of those who have voted at an election, who may vote to signify their opinion of this bill, and in obtaining one-half, if that one-half be a majority of the votes cast, then prohibition becomes effective. It is a very simple proposition indeed. If not one-half of the voters of this Province say that the present balance of political parties shall continue, or if they say it shall be changed, then it is changed or continued accordingly. I cannot get away from that as one of the simplest and fairest propositions that could be submitted; a majority of those who on occasions such as a general election go out to express an opinion upon public questions affecting the Province, being asked to come out and express a public opinion on this question, ought to be, in my judgment, conclusive as to the result. Nothing less should be taken, nothing more need be asked. It is the principle of equipoise, which maintains our institutions in their present shape.

Vote of 1898 the Basis.

That vote is to be based on the elections of 1898, as we at present intend. In my opening speech I said it would be based upon the general elections that may take place some time during the coming summer. Objections were taken to that on two grounds. First, it was said that some would refrain from voting in order that the aggregate vote may be small, and thus make prohibition easy to carry. Others said: We will force the vote, make it as large as possible, and make prohibition difficult to carry. Both proposals are objectionable, and, so far as the law is concerned, should be prevented, if the law can prevent them. In order to find a sure basis, and one that is already determined, we have taken the vote of 1898, and in taking the vote of 1898 we assume that the registered vote on the bill will be as near as may be the same as the vote which may be polled in 1902. For instance, I find in 1898 the registered vote was 582,345; that was in our last general election. In the last Dominion election, in 1900, the registered vote was 582,403, or only 58 greater than in 1898. And if hon. gentlemen will notice this fact they will see that my inference from that is a sound one. The vote of 1898 was practically taken upon the lists of 1897, for the election was in March. The vote of 1900 was taken upon the list of 1900, for the vote was in November. In these three years the increase in the registration was only 58, so that since last elec-