

tion in advance of public opinion would do more harm than good : and it is because I still hold that view, I am anxious to know precisely what is the state of public opinion in this country upon this question ; and that can be ascertained by plebiscite more accurately than by any other method ; and that being the case, I am opposed to this proposition for delay. I am opposed to this proposition to obtain information which has been already obtained, and I am in favour of a referendum in order that the opinions of the people of the country may be ascertained on the subject, The proposition which the hon. Minister submits has no relevancy to the question before us.

Mr. LANDERKIN. We have learned to-night that the Finance Minister in the past has had moments of weakness. He has told us so, and in one of those moments he voted in this House for a prohibitory resolution. I wonder if the hon. gentleman has one of those weak fits upon him now.

Mr. FOSTER. No ; I feel quite strong.

Mr. LANDERKIN. I wonder if the resolution which has emanated from his brain is the result of weakness or of power. He was good enough to tell us to-night that in the future he would be more honest. Had he not done so, some of us might have had some suspicion about the honesty of his course in the future. After I had in a playful manner said, when the hon. gentleman asked the hon. member for Lambton to read all his speeches, that life was too short, was the Finance Minister in a moment of weakness when he indicated that I was not in a condition to understand them if I did read them. The hon. gentleman may have thought that I who am always in a condition to know what is said in this House, would tolerate an impertinent and false charge such as that. My position is so secure, wherever I am known, that the imputations of such a man as he will not be listened to by any hon. gentleman in this House. I have been in this House for a good many years, and during all that time hon. gentlemen know well that I have never been in other condition in which I was not able and ready to attend to legislation, when the Finance Minister, from the position he has attained, casts, after the playful exclamation I made use of, an imputation of that character upon me, I would perhaps be justified in not replying to it and may be now demeaning myself by noticing a statement of that character coming from the source it did. It may be possible that I, who never, in the discharge of my public duty, referred to the personal characteristics or to the frailty of any member in this House or out of it, I may see fit, on some occasion, to serve back to the Government the meed and measure that they deal to me on the other side. I may yet be obliged to do it, and I think, if I invite a comparison to be made between my record and that of the hon. gentleman, I have no reason to blush either for my friends or for my record. I listened on one occasion to the Minister of Marine, when he made a statement of the same character as that to which I have just referred. I considered the impertinence and the source it came from so contemptible that I did not reply, nor would I reply to-day did I not think it possible my silence might be construed into an assent. But I tell the Finance Minister and every other gentleman in this House that I am prepared to discuss my career and record, either as a temp-

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).

erance man or in any other relation they choose, and if the Finance Minister will throw down the gauntlet and will give opportunity for a discussion—

Some hon. MEMBERS. To-morrow.

Mr. LANDERKIN. That is the policy on the other side, but I am here to take it up to-night. I have tolerated those calumnies, and have lived through them. The hon. Minister of Finance says that public men are liable to be misrepresented. The best evidence that the charge made by the hon. Minister of Finance was false, was the fact that it was made by him. Take his record on the temperance question. The first session he came here he delivered a lecture on prohibition which lasted some six hours. He was then prepared to sacrifice everything in order to secure that boon. At that time, the Minister of Finance was enjoying his indemnity here, and he was enjoying a large source of revenue from his temperance lectures. His sources of income were well known to the people of this country, and I do not object to his obtaining his livelihood by those means. At that time he thought prohibition was a necessity, and by advocating it he reached the Treasury benches, and, after he reached the Treasury benches, not one word, not one act, nothing does he do but to discourage the measure upon which he rode into power. That is the gentleman who tried falsely to impute to me to-night a statement which he knows to be false and to be a calumny and a slander. I will not imitate him by investigating his career further than as a public man. I will not be drawn out of my course by any scandalous imputation he may make upon me, a false and scandalous imputation which every member of this House knows, and which the hon. gentleman himself knows, to be a false and scandalous imputation.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I must call the hon. gentleman to order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. SPROULE). I think the hon. gentleman is violating the rule which says that no member should use offensive imputations against another.

Mr. LANDERKIN. If the Minister of Justice is just, why did he not call the Minister of Finance to order when he made that imputation against me ?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Mr. Speaker, you have ruled the hon. gentleman out of order, and he must withdraw the expression.

Mr. LANDERKIN. I am going to withdraw. I said he made a scandalous and a false statement against me. He made both, but I withdraw them both.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. That is an evasive statement and is out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER. When unparliamentary expressions are used, the member who uses them must withdraw them absolutely, without any qualification whatever.

Mr. LAURIER. My hon. friend has objected to most offensive language used by the Minister of Finance against him, and he has protested against an imputation upon his character. If he is not allowed to refute and deny any such imputation, there should be some change in the Rules or in the fair-play allowed in this House.