

I will introduce such a bill at the following session if I am at the head of the Government. If the decision of the Privy Council is that the province has jurisdiction to pass only a partial prohibitory law, I will introduce such a bill as the decision will warrant unless the partial prohibitory power is so limited as to be ineffective from a temperance standpoint.

What does he mean by that? "I shall decide in my own mind whether it will be ineffective from a temperance standpoint, and if it will be ineffective according to my mind, I will not introduce such a bill." Now, then, my honorable friend cannot escape the responsibility, no man can who occupies the position of a Minister of the Crown. If he says to-day that he believes this bill would be ineffective, then under the terms of that promise he should never have introduced it, because that promise had at the end of it a saving clause by which if in the opinion of the giver of the promise partial prohibition would be ineffective from a temperance standpoint, he would not have put himself about to introduce such a prohibitory law. I think my honorable friend would have done wisely, no matter which side of the question he had taken, because the people, sir, in my opinion, respect and believe in those who have no hesitation in expressing their true opinions and their sentiments on any subject. (Opposition cheers.) My honorable friend on the same authority then said,

'The verdict of the people has been accepted by the Government partially and by me gladly. It is what it ought to do, and it is the only kind of Government I would be a member of.'

On February 20th of this year Mr. Ross is reported as having said: "You know what our past record has been, and what our predecessors have agreed to, and what is the general policy of the Government upon that question? That need not be repeated over and over again, because you know exactly where we stand."

#### ORIGIN OF THE ROSS REFERENDUM.

When was this idea of a referendum first heard of? Why, sir, a couple of days after the decision of the Privy Council was announced a couple of feelers were thrown out through the public press, by supporters of the honorable gentleman, in order to see what view the public would take of this referendum. Did Sir Oliver Mowat say there would be a referendum? Sir Oliver Mowat was a precise man, a man of detail, and he said: "I will introduce a bill of such and such a nature." Does the honorable gentleman mean to assert that if Sir Oliver Mowat had had in his mind any idea of any further proceedings he would not have expressed it then? Will the honorable gentleman himself say that when he endorsed Sir Oliver Mowat's promise that he then had in his mind any such thing as is called to-day the referendum, in regard to this bill? Now, then, sir, I come to the speech of the honorable gentleman the other day, a remarkable speech in many respects, one which could be followed easily and the meaning of which it was not difficult to observe. As he went on from the question of the municipalities he said—and this is not a matter over which there is any contention at all, though I think he is mistaken about one or two statements here with reference to the comparative conditions of Ontario and Quebec—that 20 per cent. of the municipalities in Ontario were without tavern licenses, and that the convictions for drunkenness in Quebec were nearly double those in Ontario. I do not know what the figures show, and I do not care, because the figures of statistics in regard to some questions are utterly unreliable. There may be a wave of temperance sentiment going over a county in consequence of which everybody found drunk on the streets may be arrested, and the opposite state of affairs may exist in an adjoining