

a due consideration of all the objections that are urged against it. I hold that it would be a great evil, and that it would retard the progress of the temperance cause for many years, if a prohibitory law were passed in one Parliament and repealed in the next. In order to prevent that, I wish that careful consideration should be given to this matter. As I said before, it should be done intelligently, and above all, it should be done with a great majority of the people behind it. If it is done in that way, and if the Bill is drawn carefully, and with a due regard to these considerations, then, Sir, it will be a success. I hope to see the day when such a prohibitory law will pass this Parliament; but unless it is such a law as I have indicated, I am not anxious to have a prohibitory law at all.

As I had not an opportunity of speaking on the second reading, I thought it only right that I should express my views at this stage of the Bill, because I am in favour of temperance; I am a total abstainer myself, and would do a great deal to see a prohibitory measure passed. But at the same time, as I have already said, I do not want to see a prohibitory measure placed on the statute-books if it is not going to be enforced, and I am satisfied it would not be enforced unless a majority of the people are behind it.

Mr. FLINT. I do not desire the Bill to pass its third reading without making a few observations in connection with some of the points raised in the discussion this afternoon. I quite agree with the line taken by the right hon. the leader of the House in declining to be drawn into a discussion of the contingencies brought before him by the hon. leader of the Opposition and his hon. colleague from York (Mr. Foster); because as every hon. member can see, any opinions expressed by so important a member of this House as the leader of the Administration upon collateral and subsidiary points in connection with the prohibition movement, would to that extent complicate and tend to cloud the operation of the public mind in dealing with the question which the plebiscite will bring before it. No doubt, that naturally and quite in consonance with human nature, there will not only be temperance feeling so-called, raised in connection with the further progress of this matter, but to a large degree party and political interests are necessarily mixed up in it, and it is advisable from every standpoint that to the very greatest possible extent political and partisan feeling should be removed from a question such as this. And, Sir, should the Government be so ill-advised as to sketch beforehand, either in greater or less detail, what they would do under certain contingencies, they would be placing a political and partisan weapon in the hands of both parties to be made use of to further complicate a question which all parties seem to have agreed should be kept as far as possible apart from these considerations. My own views have been given at great length in previous Parliaments upon the main features of this question, and those

Mr. CRAIG.

views I believe obtained their principal importance from the fact that they were supposed to represent, and I believe did in the main represent, the views of prohibitionists generally throughout the country. In regard to the course pursued by the Administration, it will be remembered that the precise method of deciding this question that has now been adopted was not in accordance with my own original idea. The question is two-fold. In the first place: is the country ready and prepared in a proper way to support any Administration and any Parliament which would bring forward and pass a prohibitory liquor law? The secondary question, and one of immense importance is this: is this Parliament ready to enact a prohibitory liquor law? And, Sir, while as the result of the plebiscite we may have evidence given us as to the state of the public mind throughout the Dominion, yet this second question is not by that necessarily settled. We may have evidence to a greater or lesser extent as to public opinion throughout the various provinces upon prohibition in an abstract way, but that does not give us evidence as to the position which Parliament, as a Parliament, will take in connection with it. The ground that I have always assumed since I began a careful study of this matter has been, that the proper method by which prohibition should ultimately crystallize into the form of law would be by public education, by the manifestation of the public will at parliamentary elections, and that in each electoral district throughout the Dominion, from time to time, there should be such an overwhelming manifestation of public feeling in favour of prohibition so that members of Parliament would be elected, pledged and determined to support and enact such a law. And although the public opinion which will be pronounced this autumn will be of great importance and value, yet the second question to a large degree remains unanswered. It may be possible that the majority of the whole electors will express their views in favour of a prohibitory liquor law as asked in the plebiscite question, and at the same time it is quite possible, and in my opinion highly probable, that the majority of Parliament may dissent from the view of the majority of the electors. In what position are we placed in that contingency? It would be just as reasonable to ask the Administration to say what it would do under such circumstances as it would to ask the Administration to say what it would do in the other contingencies sketched by the hon. gentlemen opposite. I think the duty devolving upon the prohibition party throughout the country at present is to take one step at a time, and to bring all their energy, all their enthusiasm, and all their strong faith in the sound principle of prohibition to bear in the approaching plebiscite campaign so as to produce upon the public mind, and upon the minds of public men,