

SALE OF LIQUOR IN HALF PINTS.

I cannot pass by that episode in 1897, I think it was, where the law was changed to the position it occupies to-day. The law was changed by the hon. gentleman and still remains in force. Under that change a storekeeper who has a license may sell one-half pint of spirits to any man or boy in this country of ours. (Opposition cheers.) I say the hon. gentleman has posed, and I say it sir, almost with fear and trembling, people have been found to thank God he has posed as the leader of the temperance sentiment and temperance element in this province. (Opposition cheers.) One-half pint of spirits by reason of the amendment to that effect introduced by the leader of this Government can be sold by any licensed storekeeper in the Province of Ontario to-day, and still we are asked to follow my hon. friend as the leader of the temperance movement in this province of ours! (Opposition cheers.) The judgment of the Privy Council was in 1895, and seven years have elapsed and what have we got? I shall allude presently to one or two things that have taken place during all these years, but in the meantime seven years have elapsed, and at the end of the seven years, even as Jacob hoped to obtain Rachel—so our temperance friends have hoped to receive that from my honorable friend which he has been promising them for a generation of public life, only to find in the end that they are not sure of it even at the expiration of fourteen years. Now, sir, we find certain promises were made by the honorable gentleman and his predecessors, and he said in his remarks to-day he would have been very wrong if he had precipitated a bill upon the public mind at this time. Why, sir, since my honorable friend here at my left (Mr. Marter) introduced his bill nine years have elapsed. Can it be urged with any success by any person in this House or out of it, that this great question has been absent from the public mind at all for the last eight or ten years? I think the hon. gentleman will find in the end that his judgment, at any rate, was not good when he took this Manitoba Act, not feeling able or willing, whichever it may be, to draft a proper one himself, and asked this Legislature to pass it, and hand it on to the people, a law by which among other things—and what I am about to allude to is a copy word for word in this bill of ours to-day—a law by which, among other things, it is provided that a veterinary surgeon may purchase two gallons of spirits at a time, and in another section he shall only have one gallon in his possession! (Laughter and cheers.)

DISTINCT PROMISES TO PROHIBITIONISTS.

Very well, Mr. Speaker, we come down to the promises. Here is what the Globe says was the promise made by Sir Oliver Mowat:—

If the decision of the Privy Council should be that the province has the jurisdiction to pass a prohibitory liquor law as to sale, 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.

Did Sir Oliver Mowat say that he would introduce a law and pass it on to the people to vote for it? Not one word of such intention, and Sir Oliver Mowat was too good a constitutionalist, a man of too good an instinct as far as public life is concerned, to trust himself to any such foolish proposition. Now, then, there was a loophole in the end of this promise by which my honorable friend might have escaped if he had seen fit. Sir Oliver Mowat said:—