ing such as are specified in the constitution.

In Use in Canada, Too.

In the United States the referendum has been very extensively used, and it was used in Canada. For instance, we have the referendum in many municipal matters, in school matters. If the trustees have any doubt or difficulty as to the location of a school site, then a referendum is held as to which site it shall be, and so on. We have had it in connection with the Dunkin act, which was introduced in 1864, and in the Scott act, in 1878. We have had local option on our statute books ever since confederation. A referendum was taken by Prince Edward Island in 1892, in Manitoba the same year, and plebiscites have been taken in Ontario, in Nova Scotia and over the whole Dominion. The precedents for the referendum accumulate as we look them up. A referendum was taken in sixteen of the United States on the question of prohibition alone, so that the referendum is sustained by numberless precedents as the proper course to pursue under certain circumstances, and certainly as the proper course in regard to all legislation affecting the liquor traffic. I need not, therefore, fortify the action of the Government in considering this question of the referendum any further by precedent. They are overwhelming in every quarter of the globe, in Europe, Australia, from the United States; even in England a few years ago Sir Wm. Harcourt introduced what is called a local option law to become operative unless voted against by two-thirds of the ratepayers.

Lord Randolph Churchill had a similar bill. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had one also. There was the Welsh bill and the Scotch bill; Sir William Harcourt's bill and Lord Randolph Churchill's bill, all involving the principal of the reference to the people. We are, therefore, fortified in the views we are taking by the strongest precedents.

The Basis of the Vote.

We come now to one of the most crucial points in connection with the bill in hand. What should be the basis of the vote in a case such as we are now considering? On what basis should the judgment of the people be accepted as the ultimate, complete and conclusive judgment? I want to examine this point closely in the light of opinions from several sources. The referendum has generally been carried by a majority of the parties voting for it. In the United States when prohibition was first submitted in the various States, such was the case, but when it was embodied in the constitution of the State and made permanent, as it has been in four or five States, it became operative only on a vote of a two-thirds majority. Some municipal by-laws are operative only on this large majority of two-thirds. The McCarthy act, which was introduced in the House of Commons in 1883 and which was afterwards declared ultra vires, provided that local option should only be operative on a three-fifths majority. We, therefore, have the example of the United States in regard to changes in the constitution of the various States, and the example of the McCarthy act, adopted by the House of Commons when Sir John Macdonald was Premier, calling for a three-fifths majority in the case of a permanent enactment affecting the liquor traffic. Besides, we have the evidence and the opinions of some of our strongest men.

Hon. Alex. Mackenzie's View.

In 1877, when the question of prohibition was before the country, the late Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, then Premier, speaking at Colborne, said:—"I have always taken the ground that until public sentiment has reached such an advanced stage of maturity that we would be quite certain of a very large majority in favor of such a measure it would be unwise and impolitic to attempt to enforce a total prohibition of the liquor traffic." Mr. Mackenzie, you see, said that to enforce it a large majority would be necessary. In 1878, when the Scott act was passed, and the measure was before the Senate, one of the strongest prohibitionists whom I have had the honor to know, and who for many years was President of the Dominion Alliance, Senator Vidal, was anxious that an easy mode should be provided whereby the bill could be put into force in the Provinces, or, in other words, whereby we could have Provincial prohibition, as well as prohibition by counties and cities, and speaking on that view of the case he said:—"I am perfectly satisfied that unless this measure receives the support of a large maority of them (the people) it must be inoperative." Senator Aikin, on the same occasion, said:—"I think it would be most unfortunate if public sentiment was not educated up to that state where a decided majority of the people were in favor of the law that it should be applied in any province."

Opinions of Prominent Men.

Another distinguished leader of the temperance movement in the same discussion—I refer to the late Senator Allan—moved an amendment, providing that it should only be enforced by a majority of the whole number of electors qualified to vote for a member of the House of Commons. Another well-known public man, Hon. Mr. Campbell, did not believe that law which so seriously affected the liberty and property of a certain portion of the community should be enforced by a bare majority of the votes.