

Mr. Stratton—There is just the same amount of truth in that as in other extravagant assertions the hon. gentleman frequently makes. There has never been any division of opinion in the Cabinet with regard to the line of action to be pursued on this matter. (Prolonged Ministerial applause.)

Mr. Whitney thought that the country would be as greatly interested as himself when made aware that his hon. friend had so vigorously denounced the suggestion that he had not acted in perfect harmony with his colleagues on the question. As to the remarks of his hon. friend, the Minister of Education, he desired to point out that the principle of the referendum in church bodies applied to the top and not to the bottom; that the questions were not referred back by the church courts to the people. He was also, he continued, of opinion that the Government would not be able in the coming election, as in the past, to have enrolled in their favor the extreme men controlling the temperance societies, and the liquor men, each knowing what the other was doing. It had been a spectacle abhorrent to every true lover of his country, to the looker-on and the observer; oil and water attempting to mix as far as possible in order to keep the Ontario Government in power. (Opposition applause.) He proposed to vote for the amendment, and was opposed to the bill—the referendum and every clause of the bill—as everybody knew who had attempted to find out his position. If the amendment was lost he would vote against the remainder of the bill. The Ministers had not said whether they were in favor of the bill or not; they simply said, let the people decide. He had been accused within the last few days of being in favor of the hotelkeepers and in favor of the liquor men. His hon. friend from South Brant (Mr. Preston) had stated in his newspaper that Mr. Whitney was almost as good as pledged to the repeal of the act, should he become Premier after the next election, and that Mr. Whitney's attitude on the temperance question might cost him his seat in Dundas. He (Mr. Whitney) had himself admitted that it might possibly cost him his seat, but he did not believe that any attitude the hon. gentleman (Mr. Preston) might take on this or any other question would cost him his seat. (Opposition applause.) Nor did he think that any other hon. gentleman in the House except Mr. Preston believed the truth of the rumor he alluded to. (Renewed Opposition applause.) He had also been accused by The Globe of being ready to repeal the bill. In fact, all sorts of evil things which the imagination of men of evil minds disposed them to think had been levelled against him. Continuing, he read extracts from The Globe to the effect that the bill was a poor prohibition bill, and was really a strictly limited measure of Provincial option.

The amendment was then submitted and lost on a straight party division, the Government having the usual majority of eleven.

#### Favors Referendum Principle.

Mr. Marter, on the Speaker's question as to the bill being read a third time, referred to the three amendments which he moved to the bill a few days ago, and, continuing, said that for his part he had no objection to a reference to the people, and would be glad if the answer was sufficiently necessary to carry the bill. He regretted that there had not been a fuller expression of opinion from members as to the merits of this question of closing the bars and the retail stores, and thus putting a stop to the retail sale of liquor. The bill seemed to be as far as the Government could go, and they deserved credit for bringing in a bill to the full extent of their powers. Referring to Mr. Foy's reasons for voting for the previous amendment. Mr. Marter asked if the contention was that the referendum was bad. For his own part he had no objection to the people being consulted; he thought it might be perfectly right, and they had Mr. Meredith on record on the question. But the part that was bad was the part asking for an unfair majority. That part should be excluded. He did not agree, either, with the statement that the bill was immoral. If that were so the recent temperance convention would not have almost practically decided that they had better take the bill, with its defects, than not take it at all. If it could not be improved by amendments, then he also would say that it was better to have it than not have it at all. He was anxious to do all he could for the closing of the bars, and if the bill was carried, in his opinion, the liquor trade would receive so great a blow that it would be crippled. The measure was, he understood, as far as the Government could go, but he did desire that the terms of the referendum be altered. A straight majority, as in the case of the plebiscite, the Dunkin act and the local option act, should be sufficient. If that was not to be accepted, he hoped sincerely that the people would be able to reach the great majority asked, though it seemed impossible. He did not agree with the date fixed for the vote; it was not favorable for a large vote, and he hoped that the desirability of changing it would be considered without reference to party. He moved, seconded by Mr. Tucker (West Wellington), that the date fixed by the bill for the vote be changed to the date fixed for the municipal elections.