

Reminding the House and the country that while 800,000 prohibitionists had voted for the O.T.A. in 1919, nearly half of them turned around and voted against Sir William Hearst, the man who had given them prohibition. Premier Ferguson

characterized it as "hiding behind the hedge and driving the stillette into Sir William," and later, after references to R. J. Fleming, and "the Cincinnatus of Crown Hill" (ex-Premier Drury), who had vowed their adherence to prohibition, he added that these were two of the men who in 1919 had "hit Sir William over the head with a black-jack."

All through his tenure of office, Premier Ferguson said, his effort had been to keep the great moral issue of temperance out of politics, and yet if the leaders of the prohibition forces insisted in putting it there, he would be quite content to accept a challenge on that basis. He was content that the Government should take full responsibility for administering a temperance law, and content that there should be no more plebiscites or referenda.

**No "Demands" From "Drys."**

Going back again to the Prohibition Union, he remarked upon their decision to return home, not to educate the people in temperance, but to get after the members. He characterized it as an attempt at coercion, and declared that if coercion and autocracy were to be their policy they were getting after the wrong people. He would be glad to receive the assistance of the dry forces in spreading temperance sentiment, and proposed himself to go up and down the country doing his part in it, but it must be suggestions that came from prohibitionists, and not demands. For the Ferguson Government, he said, had been placed there by the will of the people, and proposed to accept its responsibility.

**A Party of Promises.**

Speaking on the O.T.A. issue, Premier Ferguson declared the Liberal party to have been a party of promises, but without performance, in respect of temperance legislation. He reviewed the history of the Mowat Administration, which, he said, had safeguarded with provisions its promises to bring in a prohibition law. He then challenged the present Liberal Leader, W. E. N. Sinclair, K.C., to state his position.

Mr. Sinclair—If the honorable Prime Minister will wait until the vote is polled he will have full information.

Mr. Ferguson—Almost exactly the language used by Liberal leaders from time immemorial. I wonder if the rumor is correct that a message has been received from Ottawa that it would not be in the interests of the Federal Government to have the Liberal party in Ontario take a distinct stand?

Mr. Sinclair—Like a lot of other rumors my honorable friend hears, it is entirely unfounded, and no message reached here.

When the Hearst Administration had gone to the people after passing the Ontario Temperance Act, said Premier Ferguson, it had deliberately placed a referendum before the people on election day, in order that the Government be sustained or defeated on the temperance issue. But although 793,000 people had voted on behalf of the O.T.A., only 390,000 voted to uphold Sir William Hearst.

"The Government wanted to know whether the temperance forces, represented or misrepresented, as they very often are, by people who pose as their leaders, were sincere when they said they would stand behind any Government that would give them prohibition. We wanted to know just how much sincerity there was in that, and how much public men could rely on the undertakings and promises of these people who pretended to be sincere in what they said. And we found without doubt how much we could rely upon them."

**Hearst Double-Crossed.**

Four hundred thousand people, he said, who led the Hearst Government to believe on every platform in this Province that the prohibitionists would stand behind the man who gave them prohibition had turned and voted against the Government in that election.

"If you are to have public men deal fairly," Mr. Ferguson added, amid loud Conservative thumping, "you must be honest with public men."

When J. A. McCausland, Conservative member for Southwest Toronto, interposed during Mr. Ferguson's remarks that the record of prohibitionists on this famous election day was a "joke," Premier Ferguson paused to agree. "But," he added, "it was a mighty serious joke for the man whom they misled. It was certainly the greatest political tragedy that ever happened in this Canada of ours."

"Four hundred thousand people, solemnly pledged by their organization representatives, solemnly pledged to stand by the pioneer in prohibition, the man who took his political life in his hands, instead of standing by him, they stood behind the hedge and they drove the stillette into him." (Loud Conservative cheers.)

Mr. McCausland—And they would do it again.

Mr. Raney—Prohibitionists to a man!

Mr. Ferguson—Men who are organized in the cause of temperance, men who are not cranks upon the subject, men who believe there is some other method of improving law besides the thumbscrew and the vise, men who believe you can strengthen the law and do it in some other way than by increasing the penalties and fines and sending people to prison, men who are prepared to go out into this Province and help educate public sentiment, who are prepared to help overtake the five years that the prohibition people have wasted and lost—that is the kind of men that sit behind me in this Legislature.

Speaking specifically of the members of the Prohibition Union, many of whom, he said, he knew and respected, Mr. Ferguson asked what had that organization ever done to co-operate and help in the matter of temperance advancement. He had told delegates waiting upon himself and the Attorney-General what he thought of the desertion of Sir William Hearst by the dry forces of the Province.

**Calls "Drys" Intolerant.**

"And what did they do when they got back to that convention? A Mr. Austen attempted to say in his report that, while he did not agree with the Government, he believed in the honesty of our purpose. And they choked that down his throat, made him withdraw it. They had not the tolerance to allow that man to express that view. Now, how far do you think an organization that assumes that attitude is going to succeed in impressing the public of this Province?"

Premier Ferguson said he noticed that R. J. Fleming, President of the prohibition organization, was mentioned at one time as the leader of the Liberals in Ontario, and that "even The Globe" had deemed him worthy. And, "along with Cincinnatus from Crown Hill, men who had vowed their sincerity toward the temperance cause lay for Sir William Hearst and hit him over the head with a black-jack."

**Fleming and Brewery.**

To Mr. Fleming, who had said he had no confidence in the Premier, the Premier would retort that he, in turn, had no confidence in Mr. Fleming. Mr. Fleming, he said, was the executor of the late Sir William Mackenzie, whose estate owned a

brewery, and if Mr. Fleming was to be true to his trust he had to see to it that the estate multiplied as far as possible. How in the world could Mr. Fleming expect to win support for the temperance cause under conditions like that? When he attempted to represent temperance sentiment, Mr. Ferguson thought, he ought to go out of the brewing business.

"I have no hesitation in saying here, because I want it to get out to the people of the Province," said the Premier, "that prohibitionists should not make the outstanding feature of their organization intolerance—intolerance of other people."

I venture to think that the conduct of this recent convention, dominated as it was by R. J. Fleming and our perennial old friend, Rev. Ben Spence—I venture to think that their activities and their methods during the recent convention have done more to give a setback to this great temperance movement than anything that has occurred in years in this Province."

Mr. Ferguson proceeded to make caustic reference to the reception given by the prohibition convention to the statement of Rev. R. E. Knowles that they should wait before condemning the Attorney-General. Remarking that Mr. Knowles was their guest, Mr. Ferguson asked, "Wasn't that a splendid spirit of tolerance?" Then, by resolution, continued the Premier, they had decided, not to go home and educate people to temperance principles, but to get after the members and "coerce" them to their own views. If autocracy and coercion were to be the policy of the Prohibition Union, Mr. Ferguson would tell them that they were "after the wrong people." In all sincerity he would ask the temperance people to change their point of view.

**"When All Men Speak Well of You."**

Personally condemned by the extremists, Premier Ferguson said, he was comforted by the scriptural injunction, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." He was not the first Conservative leader who had been bitterly charged with breach of trust, and he went on to refer to almost exactly the same charge having been levelled at the late Sir James Whitney.

In that connection he read from the editorial page of "what I sometimes think is a moderate, sane newspaper, edited by a level-headed Scotsman gone wrong politically, but otherwise pretty sane, The Toronto Globe," from other journals, and from an utterance of the late Bishop Carman, who at that time criticized the Conservative leader. But Bishop Carman, four years later, had recanted his declaration of lack of faith in the Prime Minister, and Mr. Ferguson believed that in three or four years temperance people would, in like fashion, come to him and say that the proposed amendment had done more to suppress illicit liquor traffic than any other action.

**Honesty of Purpose.**

While he did not ask the temperance forces of Ontario to approve of the amendment the Government proposed to bring in, he would appeal to them to give the Government credit for honesty of purpose. The Government, in a word, had reached the conclusion that, unless something were done to ease the situation, "your whole temperance legislation is going to be wiped out. The honorable member for East Wellington (Mr. Raney) smiles. If he had been there one year longer it would have been wiped out by now, because nothing has contributed so much to the disrespect for the law."

Mr. Raney—We heard that before.

Mr. Ferguson—Yes, and you will hear it again. It will ring in your ears as long as you live.

Mr. Raney—It will ring from you all right.

Mr. Ferguson—Well, you set yourself up on a pedestal as a paragon for all men in temperance matters, and your methods did more to undermine public sentiment and bring law into contempt than anything that has happened since 1916.

**Temperance Sentiment Low.**

Premier Ferguson proceeded to declare that temperance sentiment was never so low in Ontario as it is today, and, while he had tried to keep it out of politics, the Conservative party was, if necessary, prepared to deal with it in that way. He was content to have the Government take full responsibility for dealing with the issue, and content that there should be no more plebiscites or referenda.

Discussing the pre-plebiscite discussions with the prohibitionist and