

nections and administered in such a spirit as will result in bringing to us more than the mere semblance of a traffic, the reality of which goes now and has gone for years and years, under the fostering care of a so-called national policy, to the enrichment of a foreign country.

There is one paragraph in the Speech which I approach, as I have no doubt some hon. gentlemen opposite will approach it, with some degree of trepidation. I refer to the passage which relates to the proposal to test the opinion of the country on the subject of a prohibitory liquor law. The question of a prohibitory law is not a party question in this country; it runs its line of cleavage through both political parties, and I fancy it will have very little respect to either party. It is not bound to have much respect to the lines of political parties as they are drawn in this country. Like an hon. friend whom I see on the other side of the House, I myself, possibly "in a moment of weakness," espoused the cause of prohibition. I found so many good and excellent people going in that direction that it seemed but natural for me to wish to bear them company. I have not yet seen reason to recant, but I cannot honestly say that I am as dead sure about the matter as I would like to be. My sympathies are, as those of all lovers of their country must be, entirely with the objects which these excellent people have in view. I entirely sympathise with them in their desire to do everything possible to mitigate and to remove, if possible, the evils that have been brought upon this country by intemperance, but I am not absolutely convinced that a prohibitory law is the best possible way. My faith has been somewhat shaken by a very important series of investigations that have recently been made, investigations conducted in the most scientific manner, and in the most unbiassed, impartial and altruistic spirit. There is clearer light upon this subject now than there was a few years ago. I do not allude to the labours of the Royal Commission which roamed over the country at very great expense and collected a vast mass not so much of evidence as of miscellaneous opinions bearing upon the liquor traffic. I allude rather to the voluntary commission of gentlemen in the United States of whose investigations a most interesting and instructive account has been published in the "Atlantic Monthly" of February last, under the hand of President Elliot, of Harvard University. I could wish that the results arrived at by that commission were more conclusive and more helpful than they are. So far as they go, I am sorry to say that these investigations do not establish that a prohibitory liquor law has been universally successful in the states in which it has been adopted or that it would, if adopted in this country, be the most effective means of curtailing—I suppose we cannot

hope to abolish—the evils of the liquor traffic. I hope that those who are engaged in the agitation will give careful study to the results of that investigation. I believe that anybody who will deliberately close his eyes to the results of that investigation, will show that on this subject he prefers darkness to light. When the matter has been carefully considered by the people of this country, as I believe it will be carefully, soberly and impartially considered, if it should turn out that there is a pronounced majority in favour, a majority so pronounced as to afford reasonable ground for hoping that such an enactment can be enforced in this country, I believe it will be the duty of the Government to introduce such a measure and place it on the statute-book, and from that duty, I believe, the Government will not shrink.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have hardly kept faith with the House, for I said when I began to discuss the Speech that I would deal with only one in three of the subjects of which it treats. I find that I have reserved to the last that which constitutes the first paragraph of the Speech from the Throne, the paragraph in which His Excellency says:

I desire to express the gratification I feel at the evidences which prevail throughout the Dominion, of the loyalty and affection entertained by the Canadian people for Her Majesty the Queen and of the desire to join with their fellow-subjects in all parts of the Empire in celebrating the Diamond Jubilee in a manner worthy of the joyous event.

I believe there is no part of the Empire in which that glorious occasion will be more cordially celebrated than in the Dominion of Canada, and no people by whom it will be more joyfully welcomed than by ours. Ten years ago, on the occasion of the jubilee of Her Majesty's accession, volume after volume was written to show the wonderful expansion and development of the British Empire during the Victorian era. I would not attempt to pass even in the briefest retrospect, the history of the Empire in the last sixty years. I prefer to confine myself to our own quarter of the world. We have in our own country abundant reasons for thankfulness and congratulation when we review the history of the Victorian age. Sixty years is not a very long period in the history of a great commonwealth, but it requires an effort of the imagination to recall the condition of things that existed in this country sixty years ago, and to contrast it with that which we see about us to-day. At the accession of our gracious Queen, these various colonies in British North America were travelling each in its own individual orbit; they were sundered by dissension of race and creed; some were even in open rebellion against the British sovereign; all of them were poor and sparsely settled, and none of them had even the semblance of parliamentary government.

Mr. RUSSELL.