

tor's Report for 1890 we find that the commitments to gaol during that year numbered 11,810, and of these commitments there were registered as intemperate, 8,478, so that about 72 per cent. of these commitments were directly traceable to the use of intoxicating liquor. The record of the Central Prison in Toronto since it was established in 1874, shows that there were 18,133 persons committed to that institution, and about 80 per cent. of this number were registered as of intemperate habits. Permit me to go a little further into the discussion as to the advisability of a prohibitory liquor law, and as to the baneful effects of the present licensing system. In the year 1834 the Parliament of Great Britain in its report on drunkenness, founded on an elaborate examination of witnesses from the three kingdoms, made the following declaration:—

“The consequences of the vice of intoxication are so many and so fearful that it is difficult to enumerate even the outlines of them; and to pursue them in all their melancholy details would require a volume. The following are only a few of the evils directly springing from this baneful source:

“Consequences to National Welfare.—The destruction of grain given by a bountiful Providence for the food of man, which is now converted by distillation into a poison; the highest medical authorities examined before your committee being uniform in their testimony that ardent spirits are absolutely poisonous to the human constitution, so that not only is an immense amount of human food destroyed, whilst thousands are inadequately fed, but this food is destroyed in such a manner as to injure greatly the agricultural producers themselves for whose grain, but for this perverted use of it, there would be more than twice the present demand. The loss of productive labour in every department of occupation to the extent of at least one day in six throughout the kingdom as testified by witnesses engaged in various manufacturing occupations; by which the wealth of the country is retarded or suppressed to the extent of one million out of every six that is produced, to say nothing of the constant derangements, imperfection, and destruction in every industrial process, occasioned by the intemperance and consequent unskillfulness, inattention and neglect of those affected by intoxication, producing great injury to our domestic and foreign trade. The extensive loss of property by sea, from shipwrecks, foundering, fires, and innumerable other accidents which, according to evidence of most experienced shipowners and nautical men, are clearly traceable to drunkenness. The spread of crime in every shape and form, from theft, fraud and prostitution in the young, to burnings, robberies and more hardened offences in the old; by which the gaols and prisons, the hulks and transports are filled with inmates, and an enormous mass of human beings are transformed into exercises of corruption and weakness, and constituting our troublesome and dangerous classes. The retardation of all improvement—inventive or industrial, civil or political, moral or religious. That the mere pecuniary loss to the nation from the several causes already mentioned may be fairly estimated at little less than fifty million pounds sterling per annum.”

At this late date it is scarcely necessary to argue in favour of the prohibition of the liquor traffic, because it must be plain to everyone the beneficial effects which a prohibitory liquor law would have upon the morals and upon the trade of the country. This question has narrowed itself down to the issue, whether the people of this country are prepared or not for the reception and the enforcement of such a law; and to properly argue the question now, we have got to argue it from this standpoint. A few minutes ago I pointed out the fact that the Canada Temperance Act had been adopted in a large portion of this Dominion; and just allow me briefly to show the present condition of the different provinces so far as prohibition is concerned. We find that in Prince Edward Island the whole of that province, except the city of Charlottetown, is under the operation of the Canada Temperance

Act, and so far as I know the working of the Act has been satisfactory there. It is quite true that there, as well as in other portions of the Dominion, there have been infractions of the law. That is inevitable, but all we can ask of any law is that it reasonably answers the object for which it is promoted and adopted. Perhaps I should leave the description of the working of the Act in the different provinces to hon. gentlemen coming from these provinces, but I may remark that the Province of Nova Scotia has more than one-half its territory under the operation of the Canada Temperance Act, and that prohibition largely prevails in other portions of the province, owing to the unwillingness of the people to sanction the issuing of licenses. In the Province of New Brunswick I am informed that nine counties out of fourteen are still under the operation of the Canada Temperance Act. In the Province of Quebec, in which the people did not so generally avail themselves of the provisions of the Canada Temperance Act as in some of the other provinces, I am told that the Act is still in force in three counties and that the Dunkin Act is still in force in one or two other counties. So far as Manitoba is concerned, I believe that four-fifths of that province is under the operation of prohibition through provincial legislation. In the Province of Ontario it is quite true that at the present time the Canada Temperance Act is not in force in any county; but a year or so ago the Legislative Assembly of that province passed a local option law. It is quite true there is a question as to the constitutionality of that law, and that question is now before the courts; but in many of the minor municipalities the law has been voted on and adopted by the people, indicating that they are not, at all events, tired of local option. But in my judgment, Sir, were no portion of this Dominion without local option, that would be no answer to the proposition we submit in this resolution, that it is expedient to prohibit the traffic in intoxicating liquors throughout the Dominion; because I do not think any prohibitory liquor law will be acceptable to the people which does not include every portion of the Dominion; and if we had a Dominion law prohibiting the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors, there would be an enforcement of it sufficient to abate, at all events, this very great evil which is abroad in the land. Now, Sir, I believe it to be the duty of Parliament, when dealing with matters of national importance, to look after the morals of the people as well as after the trade and commerce of the country. I believe in the great wisdom of a remark made by an eminent English statesman, that Parliament should legislate so as to make it as easy as possible for men to do right, and a great legal authority has told us that the object of all law is the well-being of the governed. If these propositions are correct, it is the duty of this Parliament, as speedily as possible, to pass a law to prohibit the traffic in intoxicating liquors, which we all admit—which every reasonable person in this House or throughout this whole Dominion will admit—is hurtful to every good interest of the country. Now, Sir, I know that some men—who claim to be good temperance men, and I am not going to question their orthodoxy simply because they do not agree with me—content that the proper way to deal with the traffic in intoxicating

Mr. JAMIESON.