

to which I have alluded. Now, there is one principle on which I should go if I had charge of any legislative measure on the matter, and to which I should resolutely adhere, and that is, that I should not hand over the licensing authority to any existing body or to any elected body which was charged with other administrative functions. (Loud applause.) I will tell you why I think so. It is not that existing bodies of whatever nature and with whatever functions they may have been trusted would do other than approach the licensing question with ability and with integrity, and with the same desire to promote the good of the people as I believe the present licensing authority—the magistrates—have at heart. It is not that, but it is, I think, that the addition of a licensing authority to the functions either of existing bodies, such as town councils for instance—or such as county councils if they are called into existence—would materially interfere with the exercise of their ordinary powers. I think so for this reason—a public body, an elected body, is not only responsible to the people, but it must necessarily, from the very nature of its constitution, desire above all things to carry out what its constituents tell it to do. Now if you had, we will say, a town council elected on the question of licensing, I fear that one of two things would happen with regard to its composition. Either it would be composed of persons who did not care so much about the licensing question as they would do about the other many important duties which a town council has to carry out, in which case the licensing question would run some risk of being neglected; or on the other hand it would be composed of persons who had been elected chiefly, or perhaps in many cases solely, on the ground of their opinions on the licensing question, and then, however excellent they might be in that respect, they might not be the proper men—they might not be experienced or well-qualified men—to carry out their other duties. The licensing question, as you well know, as your attendance in this theatre to-day proves, is one that engrosses great attention, and is the subject of very zealous opinion; and my belief is this, that any local body entrusted with the power, and elected for the purpose, of carrying out the views of the rate-payers upon that question, should be one elected for that purpose only, and pledged to discharge the duty according to the desire of