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—British Columbia,
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should reduce the hours of closing; you should place further restriction in that way, and by so doing you would greatly promote the cause of temperance and moral reform. I have this to say: we have 97 license districts. I again repeat, that under the existing law, as honorable gentlemen know, License Commissioners, and they alone, can regulate the hours of closing. Now what has been done in these 97 districts? In 37 out of 97 heretofore no hours of closing were fixed at all by the License Board. I am not referring to Saturday night or Sunday, for which we have a statutory limit. I am referring to the action of the License Commissioners, so that we start to-night with this fact that in 37 out of 97 there is no limit at all. Now what does the clause do which honorable gentlemen are considering? By that clause, with machinery exactly similar to the machinery governing Municipal Councils, hereafter when they seek by by-law to reduce the number of licenses, Councils may determine the hours of closing. We fix them in the bill at eleven o'clock in towns and cities and 10 o'clock in other municipalities. What is the effect of that? How does that work out? We have 816 municipalities. This clause of the bill will fix the hour of closing in 706 municipalities out of 816 at 10 o'clock in the evening. In seven municipalities out of eight in this Province, if this bill becomes law, for the first time the hour of closing will be fixed at 10 o'clock; and in the remaining municipalities it will be fixed at 11 o'clock. We may be met again, Sir, by the statement "that you might go further. That is all very well, but why not make a further step in advance in dealing with the hours of closing?" I ask you again to consider the provisions of the bill on pages 4 and 5; and there we make it possible for the electors bringing their influence to bear upon the Municipal Councils to still further reduce the hours of closing, so that the people may govern, and if they do not like 10 o'clock they may make it a still earlier hour. If in cities and towns they do not like 11 o'clock they can shorten it one hour or more, just as the Municipal Council, the voice of the people, declares. That this provision is rendered less effective, in that we require a notice to be given to the Clerk of the Municipality, that we require 100 electors, say in this city of 200,000 souls, to sign a notice to the Council to pass a by-law shortening the hours of closing—that this involves too much trouble—no one will contend. I know that no honest, enthusiastic temperance advocate in this province will avail himself of that argument. He will say we are willing, we have