

jority of the people are fully agreed. The difficulty is, that a large section of that majority views any such legislation, not as a finality even provisionally, but as the stepping stone to something more radical and thorough-going. Prohibitionists and practical legislators are thus working at cross-purposes. The former regard any restraints upon the traffic as futile, and look forward to its entire destruction. Thus, while Ministers desire to make the law as stringent as public opinion will warrant, the total abstainers have a direct purpose in making the law as unpopular and unworkable as they can. Their attitude towards any Government measure is a constant source of embarrassment whenever legislation is attempted. Prohibition may have justice and propriety on its side, but the question is as to its practicability. Those who jump at conclusions in a spasm are always ready with theoretical short-cuts to perfectibility. Their motives may entitle them to respect, and that is all that can be said in their favour; practical results must be governed by practical common sense, not by philanthropic fervour, however earnest and unselfish it may be. We believe it to be certain that the temptation to excess keeps pace with increases in the number of licensed houses, and hence the obvious conclusion that they should not be multiplied *ad libitum*. If municipal officers abuse their powers—and we think they do—they ought to be deprived of them. For these reasons Mr. Crooks' Bill seems deserving of support in its general provisions. It does not seem an undue restriction upon either the vendor or purchaser of liquor to confine the issue of licenses to one for every two hundred and fifty inhabitants in a municipality. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that one comprehensive provision is not likely to be adapted to all sections of the country. The actual needs of municipalities can be gauged by no hard and uniform system of measurement. Cities and county towns, for example, should be placed on a different footing from rural constituencies, and in both cases still further distinctions will be obvious when we come to compare one city or town with another, or one township with a not very distant neighbour. The Village of Yorkville, for instance, will be entitled to eleven taverns under the new Bill, whilst four are found sufficient at pre-

sent. It is true that the municipality is not bound to issue licenses up to the maximum, but in other municipalities the prescribed minimum may err as widely on the other side. Take a place like Clifton, for example, and will anybody pretend that a license system based on population will be satisfactory? Still, on the whole, the new Crooks' Act is a step in the right direction, and we should like to see it fairly tried—an impossibility, we take it, to be shown by next year's renewed tinkering at the subject. The most objectionable feature in the measure is the enormous increase of patronage it throws into the hands of a Government exceptionally greedy of it. Centralization, unnecessarily monopolizing, and a profuse multiplication of offices, are new "planks" in the Reform "platform," devised since the party secured office. Municipal jurisdiction in the matter of liquor licenses has been grossly abused, but that is no reason at all for the wholesale grasping at political influence attempted in this Bill. We may go further, and point to the obvious conclusion that neither this Bill nor the Hospital Trust Bill would have been introduced in their present shape if the Treasurer had been returned for East Toronto. The policy may seem shrewd which consolidates all power in the hands of a despotic Executive, and visits private pique at the same time upon a constituency which has given offence to a Minister; but such a system is rank Bonapartism, and it is scarcely likely that *les Idées Napoléonnes* will gain any permanent footing in Ontario.

The last Session of an American Congress before the quadrennial contest is not usually a fruitful one. Both parties are too anxious to put the right foot forward before the people, and too busy in preliminary thimble-rigging for honest and earnest work. In a few months the Conventions will meet to determine upon platforms and candidates, and names are beginning to be mentioned on one side or the other. If we may trust Senator Conkling and ex-Governor Morgan, General Grant has at last abandoned his hope of nomination for a third term. The President has certainly not avowed it in public, and may possibly take advantage of his reticence when the Republican Convention assembles in June. If, by official engineering, he can be manoeuvred into the