

papers of my province and perhaps in other provinces I shall be taken to task for this to-morrow or before the next election—in order to get a vote the parishioners were called to the church, all the parishioners had to swear, and then they started in procession for the poll where the authorities were present to see how the people were voting. And you claim that this is the free expression of the will of the people, in an open vote, in the year 1916, at a time when everybody has liberty to attend to their municipal, their school, their parochial, their parliamentary business with a secret ballot. We still have in the province the open ballot. Such is the case and such was the way the vote was taken in more than one parish. And now that this vote has been procured, we hear on the floor of the House: You have so many counties that went dry, you have so many cities that went dry. In the list of parishes quoted by the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil), there were two parishes in the county I have the honour to represent. I am willing to bear the responsibility of what I say now. I would rather go back to private life, holding the opinion I do, and after having studied the question as I have done, rather than lack the courage to stand up in this House and say: Beware, because you cannot compel me to practice a virtue by a law enacted by any parliament. Charity is a virtue, but do you think that this parliament should pass a law to compel me to be charitable? Should this parliament pass a law compelling me to be temperate if I did not want to be? No, sir, it is an encroachment on the liberty of the people. Consult the people, and if they are willing to have prohibition, give it to them; but enforce the law and see that those who have made the sacrifice of their liberty reap the benefit of this sacrifice. Sir, I hope that every hon. member who has done me the honour of listening to my remarks will admit that, holding the opinion I do, I yet respect the opinions of those who differ with me. They are perfectly at liberty to have their opinions, but I claim for the representative of the riding of St. Hyacinthe the right to have his opinion and to express it in the House of Commons.

Mr. WILLIAM WRIGHT (Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, the question of the prohibition of the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors is a very old question indeed. It has been discussed before the public of this country for more years than I can well remember. It has been dis-

cussed in this House on many occasions, and in the various legislatures of the provinces which comprise this Dominion. It has been discussed before the county councils, before the municipal councils, in the parishes and in the various churches. It has been discussed in the papers to a very great extent indeed. If all the words that have been spoken and written on this question in the Dominion of Canada were summed up, we should arrive at the conclusion that it has been discussed to a much greater extent than any other public question in the Dominion of Canada. So I do not feel that I am called upon to say anything to elucidate the very great evil that the drink traffic has caused in this great country of ours. The immoderate consumption of intoxicating drink is an evil admitted by every man in the Dominion of Canada. It is only when we come down to the question as to whether there is such a thing as the moderate use of intoxicating drink that there arises a difference of opinion. I have the very greatest respect for those who are accustomed to drinking in what they are pleased to term moderation, for that large class in the community who can take it or leave it alone. Usually they proceed to demonstrate the first part of the proposition, and then they expect us to take their word for it that they can leave it alone. As to the right of this Parliament to deal with this question, I feel that we have that undoubtedly. This evil is so great that I think the people of this country have delegated to us the power to deal with it, and they expect us to take the position of responsible representatives, and to say yes or no to the proposition that is here before the Chair. Personally, I feel like endorsing the position of the mover and seconder of this resolution, because I think the time has arrived that the hands on the dial of the clock have reached that point when something must be done with regard to this great question. How are we to deal with it? It seems to me that there are two methods open, one to deal with it through the various provincial legislatures, and the other to deal with it through this Dominion Parliament. What are the objections to dealing with it through the legislatures? One of the objections that has been raised is that they have not sufficient jurisdiction to prohibit the manufacture of intoxicating liquors. That may seem a serious objection, but to my mind it is not altogether an insuperable objection. I think the powers of the provincial legislation should be supplemented by action or legislation