

convictions for drunkenness were only six per thousand. The Canada Temperance Act has been a perfect curse. Under the Prohibition Act that we have had for a year or so, Sunday has been the great night for getting drunk, and Monday has been the day when the people who got drunk have been brought before the courts. If I thought an amendment to the Canada Temperance Act would improve things I would hold up both hands for it, but I am satisfied that it will not, and I shall support the amendment of the honourable gentleman from Middleton.

Hon. J. G. TURRIFF: Honourable gentlemen, I am very much in sympathy with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition and the remarks of the honourable gentleman from Middleton as to the bringing down of important measures in the last days of the session. But ever since I have had the honour of a seat either in this House or in the other House that has been the practice under all governments, Liberal, Conservative, and Unionist, and in my judgment it will continue to be the practice for some time to come. Under these circumstances I do not think it advisable for us to listen to the argument that we should delay the passing of this Bill simply because it has been brought down to this House at a rather late date. If there is any one Bill or any one subject that has come before Parliament upon which members generally are well posted, it is that of prohibition. This question has been before all governments, Provincial and Dominion, for many years past. It has been shoved backwards and forwards; as the honourable gentleman from Middleton said, the buck has been passed by the Dominion to the provinces and by the provinces to the Dominion.

To my mind, the legislation we are considering to-day is a step in the right direction. It gives the province a right to have bone-dry prohibition if they want it. My honourable friend who has just taken his seat says that the Canada Temperance Act encourages the sale of whisky and is productive of drunkenness, and that it was passed by the liquor people. If it was passed by the liquor people we could not expect any other result. In the country generally the Canada Temperance Act has not been promoted by the liquor people. It was passed at the instance of the temperance people. They want to have something definite. They want it made possible for either the province or the Dominion to have

Hon. Mr. McSWEENEY.

a prohibitory Act of they so desire. I would prefer to see a Dominion Prohibitory Act, but I am not sure that, for the present at all events, the measure which the Government is now introducing is not the proper one. It will not satisfy everybody; no Act that you can pass on this subject will satisfy everybody; but it is a move in the right direction and it should be given a trial. I quite agree with my honourable friend beside me (Hon. Mr. Foster) who suggests that if we cannot finish our business to-day we ought to take this evening and to-morrow to deal with this matter. Better keep Parliament in session for another day than break the promise that the Prime Minister has made to the temperance people and disappoint a great majority of the people of Canada.

I do not intend to labour this matter further, but I want to say that in my judgment it would be a great mistake to vote for the amendment of my honourable friend from Middleton (Hon. W. B. Ross). I think we ought to pass this Bill and thus give the provinces an opportunity of doing what they think right in the matter.

Hon. C. E. TANNER: Honourable gentlemen, I do not want to allow this opportunity to pass without expressing in a few words my opinion on this subject. In the first place, I am satisfied that the views expressed by the honourable member from Middleton (Hon. W. B. Ross) do not represent public opinion in Nova Scotia. In the next place, in my view his amendment is not logical. At the present time, under the Canada Temperance Act, the Dominion of Canada pays all the expenses of referendums when called for by municipalities.

Hon. W. B. ROSS: I admit that.

Hon. Mr. TANNER: It is perfectly logical, therefore, to my mind, that the policy embodied in the law which has been on the statute book for many years should be extended and that if a province desires a referendum in accordance with the established policy of the present Act, the Dominion should pay the expense of that referendum. In any event, the honourable gentleman's ground in regard to the expense of the referendum is not a ground for defeating the principle of the Bill, but is a matter which might legitimately be considered when the Bill goes into Committee. It is not a reason for defeating the whole Bill.

I am not going to repeat what has been so well said by honourable members who have already spoken. I merely wish to say