

informed afterwards by a report of the gentleman to whom the resolution was entrusted to carry to the Government, that the answer of the First Minister of that day was, that it would be unconstitutional to attempt to take the sense of the people of this Dominion in any such manner. I never could understand why it was unconstitutional. I know that in other countries, such as France, the public sentiment of the country on a given question has often been ascertained by a *plebiscite*, and I think this question is of sufficient importance to warrant the Government of this Dominion in ascertaining the sentiment of the public on the question in that way. Now, Sir, we will, no doubt, be told that prohibitory legislation has been a failure in nearly every case in which it has been tried; and we often hear of the Maine liquor law; we often hear that it has not restrained the traffic in intoxicating liquors, but I would ask you, and through you the members of this House, whether any effort to repeal that law has ever been successful. On the contrary, from time to time, the people of the State of Maine, instead of taking a retrograde step on that question, have taken an advance step, by making the law more perfect and stringent. We have had a great deal of legislation in this country for the purpose of regulating the traffic in intoxicating liquors; but, it seems to me that that traffic refuses to be regulated. I am credibly informed that on the British Statute Book there are over 200 enactments which have been passed with a view of regulating the traffic in intoxicating liquors. But, Sir, it has been found there, as it has been here, that it refuses to be regulated, and when we find a traffic refusing to be regulated, a traffic above and beyond the restrictions which the law attempts to throw round about it, it is time that traffic should be prohibited. I know, Sir, that perhaps my sentiments will not meet with the appropriation of all my constituents, but I am speaking my honest convictions upon this question. I am prepared to do justice to those engaged in the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and I trust before this Parliament is at an end, or at least before many years pass by, we will have legislation upon this question, which will put an end at once and forever to the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and in order to do so, for my part, I am prepared to allow any reasonable degree of compensation to those engaged in the traffic—not because I believe they are entitled to it, but just for the purpose of putting an end to the traffic. We may educate our children to the best of our ability, but the evils of the traffic are so great that when they get away from us they may be ruined by the evil influences which flow from it. I will not detain the House longer on this question. I have expressed my opinions upon it, and though they may be perhaps distasteful to a number of those who occupy seats in this House, or if not distasteful, at least in opposition to their views, I believe it is the duty of the people's representatives, of men occupying such positions as we occupy, when such an important question comes before the House, to honestly and candidly state their views upon it, in order that the country and Parliament may know where we stand with regard to it.

Mr. McCRAVEY. I had no intention of saying a word upon this occasion; nor should I have risen but for the remarks which were made by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Cameron), in reference to the operation of the Scott Act in the county of Halton, which I represent. However, I may refer somewhat to the remarks made by the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Beatty). Speaking with reference especially to the revenue obtained from the traffic, he laid a great deal of stress on the fact that we have obtained a large amount of revenue from it; and he went on to show that we were collecting about \$5,000,000 per annum from this traffic. The hon. gentleman did not take into account the loss which the people of this country sustain

Mr. JAMIESON.

from the use and abuse of the traffic in intoxicating liquors. I have repeatedly taken the trouble to go over this matter carefully, and I have satisfied myself that there is no comparison whatever between the revenue this country obtains from the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and the loss sustained by it, through the use and abuse of this traffic. I am satisfied in my own mind, that if you take into account the amount of liquor that is imported and the amount that is manufactured and sold at retail prices, the land used for growing grain, hops and other products used in the manufacture of liquors, the capital and labour employed in the wholesale and retail liquor business, the loss of labour which might be employed in other industries, the destruction of property by land and by water, the theft, bad debts, failures, pauperism, destitution, sickness, insanity and death produced through the traffic, you have a sum of money that will outweigh five times—yea, more—all the amount of revenue obtained from this traffic. And even supposing, Sir, that we do receive a large amount of revenue from it, will any amount of revenue compensate us for, or will it justify, a moral wrong or a social suicide to the people of this country? Will any amount of revenue justify the fact that many of the people of this country are destroying themselves by the use of intoxicating liquors? I have no hesitation in saying, Sir, that the amount of loss to this country—absolute loss—worse than loss—resulting from this traffic, amounts to \$25,000,000 or \$30,000,000 per annum. Why, Sir, there would be no difficulty in providing for our public works if this traffic were abolished in the country. I am satisfied that there is not a single individual in this House who does not recognize the fact that enough money is lost by the use and abuse of this traffic in the ways I have indicated, to complete all the public works of this country in a very few years. Now, Sir, I come to a statement made by the hon. member for Victoria, Ont. (Mr. Cameron). I am perfectly astonished at the statement made by that hon. gentleman. Where he has obtained his information I certainly cannot tell; but I have no hesitation in saying that he could not have obtained it from those engaged in the traffic in the county of Halton. I state most emphatically that the statement is incorrect—that the hon. gentleman has been misinformed. I state most unhesitatingly—and I am satisfied I can prove what I say on the testimony of the hotel-keepers themselves—that there is not one-tenth, or one-fifth at most, of the amount of liquor sold in the county of Halton to-day that there was before the adoption of the Scott Act. The Scott Act is as well administered in that county as any other Act in force there. We all know that in a small county like Halton there are difficulties in the way of enforcing it strictly; we know that individuals are able, to some extent, to obtain liquor. But, Sir, the statement that there is as much liquor sold as before the passage of the Act is entirely incorrect; and if the hon. gentleman obtained his information from the Inland Revenue officer, it is something new to me. I asked in this House, last Session, for a return, showing the number of certificates that had been given by physicians in the county of Halton to enable persons to obtain liquor, and very few were returned.

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria). I did not state—I wish to correct my hon. friend—that I obtained the information myself from the Department of Inland Revenue; but my information was communicated to me by a party who had himself seen and heard the reports of the officer of Inland Revenue, in the possession of that Department, and I am perfectly willing that the correctness of my statement should be decided by reference to the reports of the Inland Revenue officer, sent in to the Department in the last week or ten days. Those reports, I have no doubt, will confirm my statement that the consumption of spirits in the county