

have agreed that a petition signed by one-third of the electors should be entitled to apply for a license; we have agreed that a petition signed by two-thirds of the electors should be favorable to the granting of a license, and having agreed to that mode of deciding, it seems to me reasonable that we should agree to the same mode of deciding that there should be no licenses at all in a district. If we oppose this proposition we should go back, and decide against admitting the clauses allowing certain portions to be decided by the people. The form is a rigid form—a form, as I pointed out before, not merely requiring a majority of all those who go to the polls, but an actual majority of all the electors in a division. The hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Cameron) objected, because, he said, it had been proved by experience that prohibition in minor districts is a bad thing. I do not think it has been proved by experience. On the contrary, my belief is that, if anything is more established than another, with reference to the plague of drink, it is that, the fewer the facilities, the less the plague, and that, if you can limit the number of drinking places, you will have less drinking. It is quite true that, if your law be such that it is a dead letter, and your ostensible limitation means an increased number of drinking shops, then you do not limit the drinking facilities. But you have already adopted the proposal that two-thirds of the electors in any polling division may petition, and with absolutely fatal effect, against the granting of any licenses in that division; and so, by adopting that cumbrous procedure, the people may prohibit in that division. Now, why not permit those in a larger area—those of a municipal organization, which the present proposition deals with—if they please, to declare, by an absolute majority, that there shall be no licenses within their municipality. It is quite true, that will not be so perfect a protection against the plague of drink, as if the people were enabled to effect the absolute prohibition within a larger area. It is quite true, it would be much more advantageous if instead of one township having no liquor sold within its limits, you had a large area of township in which there was no liquor sold. It was that that the advocates of the Temperance Act sought to accomplish, and it is that that they will accomplish in those cases in which there is a diffused popular sentiment within the area—a sentiment prevalent in the different parts of the district in favor of their view. We are now dealing with the case of a municipality in which an absolute majority of all the electors signify their desire that there shall be no licenses within that municipality; and I say it is a good and wise provision which secures a very decided preponderance in favor of prohibition within the municipality, and it will produce good results. It is quite true that the drunkards in the municipality will go outside and get drink; but they will not get so much as they would if it were sold in the municipality; and those who live in it, and are liable to be tempted—the young men—will be less liable to wrong when they have to go outside of the bounds of the organization to get their liquor. Therefore, I regard it as a most valuable thing to secure prohibition in a small area if you cannot get it in the larger area. To say in the face of what we know exists in the Province of Quebec, where we have heard from time to time from hon. members of there being two or three or four townships or municipalities within their counties in which no licenses were sold, because the people did not choose there should be any issued, and that good results have flowed from that—to say in the face of that you are going to do away with the right of the majority of the people in a municipality to prohibit the sale of liquor, is to tell us the most precious part of the Bill you proffer to us is to be blotted out by your own act.

Mr. McCARTHY. We have listened with pleasure to this temperance address of my hon. friend, but we are not
Mr. BLAKE.

here as a temperance meeting. We are here for the purpose of giving practical legislation for the people. If there is one thing we ought to be careful of, it is not to legislate in advance of public opinion, not to put a law on our Statute-books which will be disregarded. Whatever may be the state of public opinion in Quebec, I hold this law is to be a law for the whole Dominion, and we have endeavored in the Committee to so arrange this measure that it would be acceptable to the people at large. I was opposed to the forty-sixth section from the first, and am perfectly consistent in opposing it still, but it is a different thing to say I should be opposed to the proposition of my hon. friend in amendment. What is the proposition in the Bill, and how does it compare with the law? My hon. friends opposite who are so eloquent in favor of temperance, took from the people, when in power some five years ago, the right to have the sale of liquor suppressed in local municipalities. They professed to speak in the name of temperance when they contended that the law would be ineffective in smaller municipalities than counties and cities, and substituted for the Dunkin Act the Scott Act which only allows prohibition in large places, because they believed that to be the only practical measure that could be given effect to. My hon. friend had then not one word to say against this, but was dumb when the Dunkin Act was repealed and the Scott Act substituted for it. To-night he asks that, by simple petition, without an opportunity being given of hearing both sides, it shall be decided in a place whether liquor shall or shall not be sold. We know now, that where the Scott Act is in force, a large petition has to be presented; we know that after that petition has been presented and the question debated, frequently the majority of the voters, on hearing what has to be said on both sides, do not support the law, and the people who signed the petition are found, as my hon. friend told us they were in his own case, turning their backs on their presentation and not giving that moral support to the law without which no law can be effective. If we are now to restore the power to have prohibition in local municipalities, let us know what we are doing and do it with moderation becoming to the House. I do not believe any of us would be satisfied with a prohibitory law simply enacted by the vote of a majority which might at the very next opportunity declare themselves, in the same way, opposed to the law. We ought without hesitation to reject the clauses in the Bill I have presented, and consider then the other question suggested by the hon. member for Rouville, and see whether that can be a proper measure or not. Is this question which has been raised by the hon. member for Durham germain to the matter before the House? We are not here dealing with a prohibitory law. The Committee was not struck for the purpose of passing a minor Scott Act, but for the purpose of regulating the trade in intoxicants—not for the purpose of saying that in particular localities there should or should not be prohibition. That does not appear to me to be at all germain to the Act. I would much prefer to see this question brought up in connection with the Scott Act. I want to see the Scott Act made as effective as possible. I desire that in those places in which Parliament thinks the people ought to have the power of determining whether there should or should not be prohibition—prohibition, if decided on, should be made effective beyond measure; but if in one village there is practical prohibition, while in the neighboring localities there are licensed houses—if a small area is to be deprived of licensed houses, while they are allowed to exist on the border, what practical prohibition have you got? That was the reason which induced Parliament to say prohibition could not be effective, unless enforced in places as large as a city or county. If prohibition should be restored, it ought to be restored by amendment to the Scott Act. What does the amendment of the hon.