

I.—Provincial Prohibition.

SIR,—It appears probable that, acting upon a mistaken belief in the force and effect of the recent decision of the Privy Council upon the questions submitted to it respecting the power of the Provincial Legislatures to deal with the traffic in intoxicants, an attempt will be made at this session of the Legislature to pass some measure of provincial prohibition. The question is one of the most serious moment from a great many points of view, many of which do not always meet the consideration which they deserve.

It is the intention of the writer in this, and (with your permission) some succeeding letters, to ask the dispassionate attention of the general public to a few of these aspects of the case. It is a subject badly in need of calm consideration. Almost the only language heard in public upon it is the passionate and rhetorical appeals of the extreme prohibitionist wing of the temperance party—appeals in which the evils attending upon the traffic are painted in the most lurid colors, but in which one seldom meets calm and candid attempts to deal with such aspects of the case as the rights of the common citizen who is neither prohibitionist nor “rum-seller,” nor the rights of property, nor the question of revenue, nor the legal difficulties that surround the problem, nor the collateral effects of attempts at enforcement upon the general morality and regard for law of the communities in which such attempts have been made, nor what, in the light both of the abundant experience of other countries and of our own peculiar circumstances and surroundings, is the probability of any success in our own case of another such attempt.

It is not that such considerations are entirely ignored by the general public. One has only to mix in general conversation in any class of society, in this city, at any rate, to find out that these aspects of the case are thought of by the general public, and the prohibitionist's view of the problem is very far indeed from meeting with general acceptance. But the trouble is