

Liquor Traffic—Ontario.

12540a. You spoke of the Scott Act as having bred sneaks, and that kind of thing. Were the things that were so deplorable, done by persons who had the alcohol habit or by beginners?—By both.

12541a. You think the licensed sale would make impossible such incidents as the Milton incident?—No; it would not make it impossible, but it would take away that tendency. I know that, as a boy, I did not care half so much for the apple I could get at home, as one I could get over a neighbour's fence.

12542a. The forbidden fruit would be sweeter?—That is it.

12543a. Was one of the objects of this union to bring about the repeal of the Scott Act?—That was one of the objects.

12544a. And it did take an active part in the repeal movement?—It did, to a considerable extent.

12545a. You were in the County of Haldimand taking an active part against the Act?—I only spoke at Cayuga.

12546a. You did take part in the campaign for repeal?—Yes.

12547a. As a platform speaker you were out under the auspices of the Union?—Yes.

12548a. Was it voluntary service or a paid service?—Voluntary entirely.

12549a. There was no pay attached to it?—None whatever.

By Mr. Gigault :

12550a. Do you think under a general prohibitory law there would be a good deal of smuggling and illicit distilling?—Undoubtedly. It is so very easy to manufacture alcohol; it is one of the easiest of every-day operations. It is not so easy to manufacture a pure or good liquor; but to manufacture an alcoholic liquor of some kind that will induce drunkenness is very easy, and it is done every day—not here to the same extent that it is in the older countries where the tax on the liquor is made almost prohibitive.

12551a. A chemist told me that it was very easy for a farmer to make alcohol by the freezing process; he would take some grape juice and make wine, and then freeze it so that the alcohol would be separated from the rest of the liquid; and the same with cider?—Yes, he could do that. But it would not be necessary to resort to such a roundabout and tedious process as to separate the alcohol from water by freezing; it would have to be repeated very often. A man may take an old tin kettle and a bit of rubber hose, almost anything in fact that will hold the liquid, and manufacture distilled spirits.

12552a. Do you make a distinction between alcohol made with potatoes and alcohol made from oats?—Not if it is purified; but a very large proportion of the spirits from the first and second distillations of potatoes is fusil oil or methyl alcohol.

12553a. Do you believe that alcohol made by illicit distillers is more injurious to health than alcohol made by legal distillers?—Yes, because it is generally drunk as soon as prepared. But if it is kept for some time, it is sometimes even better than that made by the legal distillers from silent spirit.

12554a. Is not the distilling process of illicit distillers more imperfect than that of legal distillers?—Yes.

12555a. They have no rectifying apparatus?—No.

12556a. Is not the rectification necessary in order to free the alcohol from certain impurities which are very injurious to health?—Undoubtedly it is; that is, if the spirit is to be drunk almost immediately. But if the spirit is to be kept in wood for a lengthy period, say a couple of years or three or five years, all these deleterious substances are broken up into very beneficial ethers.

12557a. Do you think illicit distillers will keep alcohol in stock for two or three years?—No.

12558a. Did you read the report of the last Commission appointed in France on the liquor traffic?—I read excerpts from it in the English scientific journals; that was, the commission of three or four years ago in reference to the spirit drinking in the north of France, and its possible causes. I just read the general results; I did not read them in detail.