

prejudicial in their character. I think I shall be able to demonstrate in a way that cannot be answered, that the position I take is a correct one. All the scientists, all the great thinkers, all the men whose opinions are worth anything, agree that any such law or of a cognate character, whose object is to restrict the liberties of the people, must have public sentiment in its favor before it can, by any means, have effect; and as it is an affirmative proposition of the temperance people that the public sentiment is in favor of such a law, it devolves on them to show that in support of their view, they have a majority of all those who are going to be affected by the law. If this is not the case, no Act of a like character can, by any possibility, have any effect. I gave some illustrations of the effect in other countries of endeavors to pass sumptuary laws—laws interfering with personal liberty; and I demonstrated that none of those laws, even in despotic countries, have ever resulted in a thorough actual and practical working. The reasons in favor of the amendment, which I bring in this Bill to effect, may be briefly summarized. Any Act seeking to enforce a sumptuary law, to interfere with the liberty of the subject, should have at any rate a full majority of the people in its favor before it takes effect. Another strong reason is, that it is a law exceedingly harsh in its provisions. What are these gentlemen, who are in favor of the Scott Act, seeking to do? Are they not trying to promote some very exceptional legislation? Are they not seeking to outrage every principle of fairness? Are they not seeking to break the Divine law: "Do unto others as you would be done by?" Is there any other instance in the working out of our constitutional system where men are sought to be injured, their property rendered valueless, themselves deprived of the means of making a living; is there any other instance except in the working out of this Scott Act where such injuries are sought to be inflicted on men entitled to equal rights with ourselves, without compensation being made to them? The advocates of the Scott Act say those men are engaged in such a traffic that they have no rights as other men have, it is a meritorious thing to legislate them into ruin and make them no compensation. In the history of the laws given effect to under our system of civilization, as long as the British Constitution endured there is nothing so harsh, severe, destructive of every idea of British honor, fair play and justice as this attempt to work this Scott Act. Yet these gentlemen say they do not like exceptional legislation. The position I take is this, while I am as much in favor as any man of reasonable temperance, not only in eating and drinking, but in speaking of others, in dealing with other men, in fact, in every condition of the affairs of this life, I do not believe this Scott Act will effect what its promoters say it will. I believe it to have proved a failure in every instance in which it has been tried. There is nothing throughout the length and breadth of the country that is bringing so much disgrace on the temperance cause as this Scott Act. I affirm the principle that before an Act of this character can be given effect to, it must have the support of the majority of those who have a right to vote. This affirmation will be re-echoed in the minds of the people from one end of the Dominion to the other. You cannot, by a small majority, force a law like this down the throats of the people and have it respected. I ask these advocates of the Scott Act to cast their eyes over the country and see what has been the result wherever it has been given effect to. Has it been favorable to the temperance cause. It has been a curse to the temperance cause, and very many of those whom we find crusading the country on every hand, trying to give effect to this most iniquitous Act are not the leaders and makers of public opinion. On the contrary, many of them are men who make a living out of temperance. They are temperance lecturers, men very largely of weak brains and infirm

purpose who, being unable to restrain their own appetites except through the most rigid abstinence, look upon themselves, because they have taken the pledge, as extraordinary apostles, as surrounded with a sort of a halo, and entitled to lecture other men who are able to restrain their appetites, to conduct properly the affairs of this world, and take care of their families. I repel indignantly the charge made against our country, that we are a nation so degraded as to require such a law as this to be enforced. I deny that the people of Canada are a nation of drunkards. In my few travels throughout the world—and I have been in other countries than this—I have seen no more sober, law-abiding people than the people of Canada. They do not require a law like this to keep them sober. There are hon. gentlemen who are opposed to me on this question, professed advocates of temperance, some of them are men whose opinions I much respect, though on this question they have become, from a long study of it, so impressed with the evils of intemperance—which every one deplores—that they are not able to deal with the matter in a fair spirit. But I think the preponderance of the temperance men in this House, men who have been consistent temperance men all their lives, are in favor of the proposition I now submit. I hope they will say something in this debate. I refer to the hon. member for West Montreal, to the hon. member for Cardwell, and the hon. member for Cornwall, the latter of whom I regret is not in his seat. All of them being consistent temperance men they are entitled to as much respect as the hon. member for Annapolis and the hon. member for West Middlesex. There are many consistent temperance men who have been working hard all their lives, who tell me that the Scott Act is not only not a benefit—an Act of no advantage to temperance—but is directly injurious to it; because it draws men away on all occasions from the proper exercise of the proper means to promote temperance. It is doing more than that—it is leading people to break the laws, and bringing temperance into disrepute when it is seen that the Act is of no effect, but promotive, instead of temperance, of intoxication. What are the inevitable results of the passing of this prohibitory law in one of our counties? The legitimate business of properly conducted hotels is destroyed, because their owners are subjected to such supervision that they cannot, if they even wished, be able to carry on their affairs and sell contrary to the law. What is the result? The consumption of our wholesome and nutritious Canadian ales and wines falls into disuse to an enormous degree, and ardent spirits, which may be conveyed in a much smaller bulk, and which are often manufactured out of the most deleterious materials, are used in their stead—not by respectable hotel keepers, but by the vilest of the vile, in such low haunts as best conceal their business; and so the Dunkin Act, as this one may be called still, instead of promoting temperance, directly militates against it wherever it is adopted. What has been the consequence? Speaking only from memory, I do not think the Act has ever been passed in any place in Ontario without being afterwards repealed immediately. That circumstance ought to silence all opposition to my Bill. I have a return from the Local Government of the places in which it was carried in Ontario. I see in the very large County of Bruce it was carried by but 3,700 votes, while 12,000 stand on the list. In Brant 2,000 voted for it out of 7,000 voters. In Essex 225 voted for it, and 102 against it, in one municipality. In Haldimand 1,200 voted for it out of a total vote of nearly 6,000.

Mr. THOMPSON. It was defeated in Haldimand.

Mr. BOULTBEE. It was. My list is dated some time back, and, therefore, is not a full one, but it shows what would be the fate of the Scott Act if tried elsewhere. Any sensible and reasonable man who fairly wants to promote temperance, but set to worry and persecute his neighbors,