

Cruelty to Animals at Hamilton, that certain statements are made. I will read the petition, so that the hon. gentleman may have an opportunity to explain to the committee what they do want. The petition on which this Bill was founded—I presume it is this, because it refers to a petition presented last year—sets forth :

"1. That at the instance of the above society (the Hamilton Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), a petition largely signed was presented at the last Session of Parliament in favor of the passage of the Bill introduced by Adam Brown, Esq., senior member for Hamilton, to make further provision for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and especially against the using of any live animal or bird as a target to be shot at.

"2. That your petitioners hereby respectfully request that the Bill introduced by Adam Brown, Esq., at the present Session, for the purpose of preventing cruelty to animals, and especially against using any live animal or bird as a target to be shot at, may be passed by your honorable body."

"3. That your petitioners are aware that great cruelty is practised towards live birds at shooting tournaments, and on other occasions, for the mere amusement of the parties participating therein, and your petitioners think that, in the interests of humanity, the law should be amended so as to prevent such cruelty being practised."

I should like, as a starting point, to request the hon. gentleman to inform the committee whether he follows that petition now or not, because hon. members will notice that the petition only speaks of one thing, that is, the shooting at animals or birds as targets, while the provisions of the Bill are much wider than that. It may enable the hon. gentleman to reply better to this point, if I call the attention of the committee to the present law. Either the hon. gentleman wants two things, or he wants one thing; he either wants what the petition asks for, or more than it asks for. Certainly the petition only asks, so far as it mentions any specific thing, the stoppage of shooting at birds or other animals as targets. If the hon. gentleman wants to go further, there are two matters in the Bill which, in my opinion, should be discussed, and placed before this House. Do I understand the hon. gentleman that he wants to cover both points?

Mr. BROWN. Go on.

Mr. TISDALE. I shall, then, be very happy to proceed. I suppose that I will have to confine myself at present to the first clause of the Bill. In referring to that particular part of the Bill not aimed at trap-shooting, I may say that I believe this House desires to legislate upon things that require to be legislated upon, and I do not think it is desirous of legislating upon theories or on unnecessary matters. Some hon. gentlemen say, "let the hon. gentleman have his Bill if it does no harm," but I hold that the House should not lose its time in legislating except where legislation is necessary. The first clause of the Bill of the member for Hamilton (Mr. Brown) does not enlarge on the provisions of the present Act, which will be found at page 1987 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, but it goes on to specify the general provisions of the present law, and says :

"Section one of chapter 172 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, intitled: 'An Act respecting Cruelty to Animals,' is hereby amended by adding thereto the following words: 'and the expression 'animal' includes any horse, mare, gelding, bull, ox, cow, heifer, steer, calf, mule, ass, sheep, lamb, goat, pig, hog, sow, dog or cat, and every other domestic animal, fowl or bird, or wild animal, fowl or bird, tamed or domesticated."

The hon. gentleman proposes to add to the clause in the present law the names of a number of animals that are evidently covered by the generic terms in the Act now in force, and that clause in his Bill is entirely unnecessary. The three subsections of his Bill, as I had occasion to remark in opposing the second reading, are open to precisely the same objection. I submit, with all seriousness, that this Bill is unnecessary. We all know, although the hon. gentleman will not admit, that it is a trivial Bill, and that it is aimed simply at the trap-shooting at pigeons, and if the hon. gentleman would bring his Bill forward in this particular, we would, to use a familiar expression, know

Mr. TISDALE.

what he was after. I take exception to those three clauses of his Bill in the interests, not of the cities or the towns, but of the larger body of constituents of this country, the farmers of the Province I come from as well as the farmers of the other Provinces. Until I read the present law I had no idea that we had such a severe law about the handling of animals, and I hold that if you go among the farmers of Ontario and Quebec and the other Provinces, and tell them that they are so cruel to their stock and the animals they use, that they need still more stringent provisions than those in the present Act, they would be justly insulted. I must read the three clauses for you :

"Section two of the said Act is hereby repealed and the following section substituted in lieu thereof:—

"Everyone who—

"(a.) Wantonly, cruelly or unnecessarily beats, binds, ill-treats, abuses, overdrives or tortures any cattle, poultry, dog, domestic animal or bird; or—

"(b.) While driving any cattle or other animal is, by negligence or ill-usage in the driving thereof, the means whereby any mischief, damage or injury is done by any such cattle or other animal; or—

"(c.) In any manner encourages, aids or assists at the fighting or baiting of any bull, bear, badger, dog, cock, or other kind of animal, whether of domestic or wild nature."

I tell you that the people who own and use animals understand a great deal better how to treat them than those gentlemen who want theoretical legislation. Let me call the attention of the House to the fact that in not a single petition in favor of the Bill have they dared to say that any such sad condition of things exists as would require further legislation against cruelty to animals. Let me read you the heading of what I call the theatrical petition; it says :

"Prevention of Cruelty. To the Hon. the House of Commons and Parliament assembled. We the undersigned citizens of Toronto, humbly pray that the Bill, introduced by Mr. Adam Brown, for the better prevention of cruelty to animals, be adopted by your hon. body."

I am sure you were all amused, as I was to-day, to see the thirty of forty petitions presented by the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Brown) or by those that he handed them to. We have all courtesy enough to hand in a petition when we are asked to. He had those petitions printed, and sometimes only twenty or thirty persons signed them. If the petitions amount to anything it will be noticed that those opposed to the Bill stated the reasons why they opposed the Bill, but the petitions of the hon. gentleman from Hamilton (Mr. Brown) which were theatrically flourished all over the House did not give any reasons why the Bill should pass. I do not believe in theatrical legislation. I believe in our getting down to common sense, and while I oppose this Bill in principle I object to being classed as one who is cruel to animals. Has the member for Hamilton (Mr. Brown) shown a tittle of evidence that the people of this country are cruel to animals. No, he has not. He has brought in a petition from a very excellent society which I am in favor of, but I think that they should keep within their own sphere. The hon. gentleman has failed entirely in proving that part of his case which asks for severe additional measures to be passed by this House for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Let me point out that, under the laws of the Province of Ontario, you cannot shoot a single bird except a pigeon, or an injurious, destructive or mischievous bird, out of a trap, because there is a severe law to punish you for shooting anything but destructive birds or game birds. All other birds are protected inasmuch as you cannot shoot them at all, not even out of a trap. I ask for evidence why this House should be asked to put upon the Statute-books a record that we need stronger laws to compel the people of this country to treat the animals they handle well and there is no evidence forthcoming. We have had enough of theatricals in this matter and enough talk to show that it is the intention to pass this Bill not upon common sense, or by arguments in its favor, but because of personal and individual influence, a proceeding which I strongly object to.