

greatly in advance of those obtaining in the United States cities mentioned. I do not intend to go into comparison of the statistics, comparing Ontario with Quebec, but I do remember reading in the Montreal Herald, one of the oldest and most reliable newspapers in Canada, a short time ago, that there were 900 places in the City of Montreal where liquor could be purchased. There was one license in the City of Montreal for every 64 men. On some future occasion I propose to make a comparison between the License Laws of Quebec and the License Laws of Ontario, and no doubt the comparison will be in favour of this Province.

Local Prohibition Provisions

Another evidence of the Government's desire to minimize the evils of intemperance so far as the legislation in its power can be effective to that end, is found in the local prohibitory enactments, represented by Local Option legislation. In 1899 provision was made for the introduction and passing by municipalities, of Local Option by-laws. Since 1899, by-laws for the adoption of Local prohibition have been submitted to popular vote on 79 occasions in 68 Municipalities. These by-laws, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors were passed in 51 municipalities and defeated in 28 instances. In 15 cases the by-laws passed were quashed on appeal to the Courts, chiefly on the decision of Judge Galt that the Act was ultra vires, a judgment that was reversed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. At the present time Local Option by-laws are in force in 21 municipalities, by which 39 licenses and 3 shops have been cut out, and one of these is within a few miles of the place where we are assembled. During the past year (1900), five by-laws were submitted, four of which sustained Local Option. Two of these were quashed by the Courts on technical grounds and one by-law was repealed. Of course it cannot be expected that the prohibition in these cases is anything like absolute, but the law has enabled the people to try the experiment.

In West Peterborough there is a healthy local sentiment. In six townships in this riding there were no licenses issued, for the reason that people do not want them. The primary object of the Liquor License Act is of course not to directly promote total abstinence, but to decrease drunkenness, and it may be claimed that the aim of the Government in framing, amending and administering the Act has been successful in decreasing the evil of intemperance and all its accompanying evils. I have shown how great has been the reduction in the number of licenses; I have shown by eminent authorities that the reduction of licenses leads to the decrease of drunkenness; I have shown that in Ontario there has been in this regard a remarkable improvement, as attested by largely decreased commitments for drunkenness, making the record of this Province in this respect lower than that of any Province of the Dominion, or of any State in the Union, or of any other country; I have shown that Ontario has the best moral record, the best record for sobriety of any country in the world. And I do not think that I am far wrong in largely attributing this result to the Liquor License Act, amended from time to time since 1876 with increased restrictions and with improved machinery for its effective enforcement. (Applause.)

Concluding Observations.

I do not claim that the Act, as it has run time to time been amended, is perfect, or that its enforcement will, or can be perfect. The obstacles in the way of effective enforcement of the Liquor License Act are very great. The temptations of the hotel-keeper most anxious to keep the law are many and great. He is subjected to all sorts of requests, from the artless to the crafty, to obtain drink in forbidden hours. The ingenuity of the drunkard is proverbial, and it is no wonder that his wiles are often successful. If the same keen quality of inventive genius that is exercised in procuring liquor were exercised in a more beneficent direction, say