

is no more efficient and painstaking officer in the employ of the Ontario Government, says:

"The number of commitments to the common gaol has, as nearly as possible, doubled during the past eleven years, but the rate of increase from year to year has been exceedingly variable. . . . It is important to note, however, that while the number of commitments have increased on the whole, the increase has not been anything like so great in one class of offences as in others. Thus, while commitments for crimes against the person and property, and against public morals and decency, which may generally be designated indictable offences, increased from 2,214 in 1869, to 3,919 in 1880, being at the rate of about 7 per cent. per annum, the offences against public order and peace, of which drunkenness and vagrancy constitute nine-tenths, increased from 2,886 to 6,640, being at the rate of about 12 per cent. per annum."

Here we have a statement from the Inspector of Prisons of Ontario that drunkenness and vagrancy constitute more than nine-tenths of the indictable offences in what we call the fair Province of Ontario. Out of the 11,300 commitments to the jails in that Province, he says 3,069 males and 726 females were committed as drunk and disorderly. If we investigated other crimes for which drunkenness is largely responsible, it would only go to confirm the position which temperance men, I am sorry to say, are obliged to take, that crime is associated with intemperance. No doubt there is crime. My hon. friend tries to cast reproach upon temperance legislation by citing the State of Maine. Let me cite the little town of St. Stephens, in the county of Charlotte, New Brunswick, where the Temperance Act has been enforced since last May. During the eight months ending with December of last year, the arrests were 49 for drunkenness, but since the Act came into force the number of arrests has diminished to four. I am not just now disposed to argue the question of the result of prohibition in Maine, but I am disposed to say that the Temperance Act of 1878, if applied and enforced will fulfil to a large extent the purpose for which it was intended. My hon. friend says it is a frequent source of perjury. But every law may be said to be a cause of perjury in the same way. We have placed a law upon our Statute-book against bribery and corruption at elections; will any man say that that law is not a frequent source of perjury? If the Temperance Act causes perjury, it does nothing more than any other law. I venture to say there is not a law upon the Statute-book of the Dominion of Canada but in some sense may be said to be a source of perjury. The principle upon which the hon. gentleman asks us to repeal this law—for that is what this Bill amounts to—would repeal all legislation, and in order to avoid perjury we should blot out from the Statute-book every law that has been passed. But the hon. gentleman also says that temperance legislation is a frequent cause of lunacy. He says that lunacy is on the increase in the State of Maine. But I find by the report of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums in the Province of Ontario, that lunacy has increased largely in that Province, and I may say in that connection that the consumption of intoxicating liquors is also on the increase. Would I be wrong in putting these two things together and drawing a conclusion, that because intemperance was on the increase and lunacy also, that one was responsible for the other? If because lunacy is on the increase in Maine we should therefore have no temperance legislation; on the same reasoning, because lunacy is on the increase in Ontario, we should have no intoxicating liquors sold, because intoxicating liquors are sold very largely and lunacy is increasing in Ontario. I find that the county which my hon. friend represents 1,714 lunatics were sent to the asylum last year.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I do not wonder at it.

Mr. ROSS. More than three times the number of lunatics were sent from his county than from any other county in Ontario. Following the logic of my hon. friend I would conclude that he was only about one third as wise as the average elector in Ontario. I would conclude from his Mr. Ross (Middlesex).

logic that if the Riding of East York furnishes more lunatics than any other county in Ontario, it is because he represents that county. I am following his own logic. He says, because there is temperance legislation in Maine, therefore lunacy is increasing. I find lunacy on the increase in East York, and I find my hon. friend representing that county; therefore, lunacy is increasing in East York because he represents that county. That is a specimen of his logic. It just proves as much in the one case as in the other. I hope the House will adopt the amendment moved by my hon. friend behind me. I hope the House will not feel that before we have had an opportunity of testing the legislation adopted by the last Parliament, after many years of agitation, we should cast aside the decision thus arrived at. I think we ought to pause and see whether the course we adopted in 1878 is a wise one or not. We have only planted this plant, and we ought not to pluck it up by the roots before it has scarcely budded or blossomed. I have evidence to show that in the city of Fredericton the Act has worked as well as any other legislation. I will read a short quotation from a statement made by the Police Magistrate of Fredericton, who says:

"The Police Magistrate of Fredericton, Professor L. Marsh, Esq., writes under date of July 20th:—As Police Magistrate of the city of Fredericton, I have much pleasure in being able to certify to the favorable results of the Canada Temperance Act since it came into operation in this city on the 1st of May, 1879, and more especially since the Act was declared by the Supreme Court of the Dominion, to be within the constitutional powers of Parliament.

"There is no such thing now as the open sale of liquor by retail in public houses or saloons; there is, of course, an occasional case of illegal sale discovered and punished. The cases of street drunkenness are very few indeed, and the business at the police office arising out of intemperance has been reduced by at least one-half.

"I feel safe in saying that in this city the working of the Act has been such as ought to satisfy the reasonable expectations of all friends of temperance."

Now, Sir, we are just testing the virtues of this Act. We are just testing it to see whether it serves the purpose for which it was intended. If it can be shown that the Temperance Act of 1878 is a failure, if we have the proof, substantial and convincing, adduced by any hon. gentleman, I shall be as ready to vote for its repeal as any other member. Why? Because I believe that an Act that cannot be enforced should be repealed. I do not believe temperance men are unreasonable. We may be charged with violating every law, human and divine, we may be charged with being fanatical; but I think we have been exceedingly moderate in forcing our views upon the people of Canada. We may be said to be an inferior order of the community, and occupy no very respectable position in society; but I challenge the hon. member for East York (Mr. Boulton) to show as the results of the liquor traffic, of which, I think, he is the special champion, any such beneficial effects upon the community as temperance legislation has produced. I challenge the hon. gentleman to show that society will be benefitted by the general, unrestricted sale of intoxicating liquors, and that under any system whereby the liquor traffic is in full force and produces its natural and ordinary results, society is in any degree more virtuous or more enlightened than it is where total abstinence is practised, and where the people eschew the use of intoxicating liquors. I appeal to the House on two grounds, then, to reject the Bill, first, because it is not desirable to repeal the Temperance Act of 1878; second, because the proposition of the hon. member for East York is absurd on the face of it; and, if allowed to add a third reason, I appeal for the rejection of the Bill of the hon. gentleman, because I believe on this question we are acting in consonance with public opinion, and in the interest of public virtue and morality.

Mr. PLUMB. I was quite prepared for the eloquent speech in which the hon. member for West Middlesex (Mr. Ross) has addressed the House; but I was a little unpre-