

small town or village this option clause may be carried, and yet the people who are accommodated by the houses will have no vote on the matter. I think this clause will have the effect of creating disorder and increasing intemperance, instead of diminishing it, for so long as intoxicating liquors are allowed to be sold, and are introduced into, and are manufactured in the country, there will be men who will sell them in spite of all efforts on the part of License Commissioners. We also know that petitions can be got up for almost anything, and a great many persons are induced to sign them, not because they object to licenses being granted, but in order to please individuals who happen to present the petitions. Many are induced, for business purposes, to sign such petitions merely to please extreme advocates of temperance, without considering the effect of such a course. I hope this clause will be struck out of the Bill.

Mr. JAMIESON. I do not understand the provision as being general in its character. The grounds set forth in the petition must be specific. I, therefore, think the provision is a good one, and should be retained in the Bill. The object is to get rid of objectionable houses, and I do not know any better judges than those who reside in the immediate neighborhood in which the licenses are sought to be granted. I was sorry to hear some hon. members state that petitions might be got up for almost any purpose. I think it does not speak well for the electors among whom those hon. gentlemen reside. In my opinion this is one of the most important provisions in the Bill, and I trust the Government will see their way clear to have it retained. If it were a general provision I would, perhaps, in justice to those holding licenses, hesitate before I approved it. When that question comes up I trust the House will be able to deal with it in such a way as will be just to all parties concerned; but in this particular instance, seeing that the charges against the applicant must be specified, I think the clause should be retained.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. In dealing with this generally, especially in dealing with a clause like this, we must see that we do not proceed too fast, or go too far. We must take the middle course and not look at this question, or at any of the provisions of the Bill, either from the standpoint of a member of a temperance society, pledged against the entire use of intoxicating liquors; or, on the other hand, we must not look at it from a tavern keeper's point of view. We must consider if we can get a reasonable Bill, because too strict a Bill will defeat itself—we have seen that time and again—and a Bill too relaxed in its provisions will offend the moral sense of the community. I must say I have a strong objection to a person losing his license or his application by a petition behind his back, if it can be avoided. I would infinitely prefer, if there is any objection to a man getting a license, and especially to a man getting a renewal of a license, that the objection should be taken openly or by a vote. There is, however, a good deal in what the hon. gentleman who spoke last stated, that this is not a general provision, but one of specific objections, and people are much more likely to be induced to sign a petition in favor of a license being granted, where it should not be granted, than they are against the granting of a license. At the same time, I do not think that a person should be deprived of his license—for it would have that effect—upon a petition presented by a mere majority, which might be a majority of one. I would propose a compromise, that instead of a majority, a petition signed by two-thirds of the electors should be required against an application for a license. That would be a compromise which would meet the views of the moderate men of the House.

Mr. BERGIN. I would suggest that there should be added to the clause something to show that the allegations

in the petition were well founded before the license was taken away.

Mr. BLAKE. The petition has to set forth some grounds, and the Committee would act under a misapprehension if it thought the petition as limited as the hon. member for Lanark stated. Among other grounds are the following: That a licensed house is not required in the neighborhood, and that the quiet of the people will be disturbed if a license is granted. These are questions of opinion. If a majority are of opinion that a licensed house is not required, I think the majority should have the power to decide it, and not have a licensed house forced on them. All the other provisions are more specific. The hon. leader of the Government has very strange notions on this point. The other evening when it was proposed to alter the Bill by adding a provision which would require licensees to obtain one-third of the number of electors, he said it would be wholly unjust and would inflict a great hardship on present licensees. One evening the hon. gentleman who thought it would be exceedingly difficult to obtain one-third, and the next evening he thought it would be an easy thing to obtain a majority, although as the hon. gentleman has repeatedly observed, a minority petition is to be obtained for a purpose for which people's good nature is likely to lead them to concur. He might get a request quite favorable to a man; but to get the majority of the petition as he said, to refuse a favor to a man is most difficult, and, under the circumstances, I have hoped that the Bill which the hon. Minister himself introduced on his own responsibility, may not be marred by his own act.

Mr. SHAKESPEARE. When this question was before the Committee, I opposed this clause—I am certainly opposed to petitions. I have had some little experience in these matters, and I have found them, on more than one occasion, to work injuriously. We very often find the same names on two opposite petitions. I heard of one such case since I came to this House. An hon. member received a petition for a certain purpose, and a second petition with an opposite design, and the name of one person was on each petition. I heard of this only a few hours ago. I think that the principle is wrong. It is true as has been stated by some hon. members, that you can often get petitions signed for anything—almost to have a man hanged. Whilst I am not at all favorable to these petitions, I am at the same time quite willing that the people should have a voice as to who should have a license, and who not; and I think that the proper and more straightforward and manly course would be to give them the privilege of depositing their votes in the ballot box. This is the only straightforward way to my mind in which to ascertain the true feelings of the people. It is a very easy matter to get people to sign their names to petitions. I have seen it done simply to get rid of the applicant, without the petition being read or due enquiry made.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. I must say that the amendment proposed is entirely in accordance with my views in the interest of temperance.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No, no.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. This is no new idea with me, for I appeal to my hon. friend opposite, whether, when I was occupying the position of Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, and a convention was held in Montreal to consider what steps should be taken by way of legislation in the Dominion Parliament for the suppression of temperance, I did not write a letter, which that hon. gentleman quoted on one or two occasions, expressing the hope which was my conviction in this matter, that if any law were passed by which a vote of the people should be taken, the measure should not be carried by a bare majority. I