

societies. While they preach total prohibition they practise something much more valuable—they practise personal prohibition. I hold that a person who believes it to be in his interest either in this world or the next, to practise personal prohibition is worthy of all praise, and he is still more worthy of all praise if he does so, not because he himself is in any danger, but as an example to others. That person is entitled to the very greatest respect, and his opinion is entitled to the very greatest consideration. But it is a totally different matter from action to force at the point of the law opinions which I say are not in harmony either with liberty or with justice. Holding these opinions, and looking at the vast responsibility we would have to undertake were we to enact the legislation proposed, feeling the due weight of the responsibility which every hon. member should feel, I have no hesitation in saying that I shall vote against the proposition, because I think it is one that in its results will cause, if anything, more injuries than the benefits that will accrue to the country. Temperance associations are not wise, even from their own point of view, in endeavouring to force this legislation on the country. They would be much wiser were they to pursue the course which, although perhaps they do not admit it, has been attended with vast success in every part of the Dominion, and the very fact that such large petitions in favour of prohibition can be sent to this House is, I admit, proof of the great success achieved. Let them be content with pursuing the path which has been successful, and not attempt to pursue a path which, in my opinion and, I think, in the opinion of the majority of the people, if that opinion were honestly expressed, would not bring about the results which are desired. But, as I said at the commencement, I admit that these petitions present such a body of opinion, honestly and sincerely entertained, that I feel all the more bound to meet them, as I have met them, with an honest expression of my dissent from what they hold. I have many electors in my own constituency who have petitioned for prohibition, and I feel I would be treating them unfairly if I did not on the floor of this House, having given no pledges whatever on the question, give the reasons why I shall vote against the resolution, which I know many of them desire to be carried. But having that respect for their convictions, I think it is due to them and to the country that this House should give a clear expression of opinion, and therefore, actuated by that regard, I shall vote against every proposition that may be made which may tend to prevent that distinct expression for which they ask: and I am satisfied, from what I have read in the various publications of the temperance people, that unless this House gives a distinct expression of opinion, they will feel they have been unfairly and discourteously treated. For these reasons I shall vote against the resolution, but at the same time I shall do all I can to have the question brought fairly and squarely before hon. members of this House.

Mr. AMYOT. I desire to ask the mover of the resolution whether sherry wine is included?

Mr. JAMIESON. Whatever is intoxicating in his character will be prohibited.

Mr. AMYOT. Then, if I understand properly from those who are in the habit of tasting wines,

it is an intoxicating drink. I am rather surprised to hear that the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) finds a difficulty in regard to the revenue which would be lost if we had prohibition. Are we not in a state of great prosperity? We were told during the late election that the system of protection gives us ample means of providing for any particular want. The Government have been boasting of four millions of surplus, and I believe the Minister of Finance himself is one of the apostles of prohibition. So, under these circumstances, I do not see that the loss of revenue should be an objection. But I go a step further. I do not believe in clubbing principles into a man's conscience. I believe those who think it is wrong to have a glass of wine are incorrect. They remind me of a parish priest, who said to his flock that anyone who tasted a drop of wine was condemned to Hell forever. His bishop, who passed by one day, said that this was going too far, because our Lord himself took the trouble to turn water into wine. Thereupon the priest replied, yes, but it was not the best thing He did. I will now endeavour to present a more serious view of the question. The mover of the resolution must know that by the laws of this country, and more especially by chapter 74 of the Consolidated Statutes, which is still in force, it is declared that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious and public worship are guaranteed to all Her Majesty's subjects. The Catholic religion is one of these religions. The Catholic priest when he says mass and consecrates has to use wine, according to the rites of his church. If the principle laid down by the hon. mover of this resolution were applied, the priest could not procure here the necessary wine. The hon. gentleman is, therefore, seeking to prevent the free exercise of the Catholic religion. With his sincere zeal, he has seen only one side of the question, the great need of having laymen apply force to send the people of this country to Heaven.

Mr. COATSWORTH. I have some hesitation in addressing the House for the first time upon this very important question, because I see some difficulties ahead of us which have been temperately pointed out by the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien). At the same time I have held for many years a strong conviction on this subject, that the evils of the traffic in strong drink are so great that it would be necessary, sooner or later, that something should be done to prohibit the traffic entirely; and, therefore, while I hesitate to speak upon this subject, yet my convictions are so strong that I feel it is my duty, not only to many of my constituents who supported me because they believed me to be a moderate temperance man, but also to the public generally, to whom we owe the duty to do what we think is best in the interests of the Dominion, not only on this question, but on all other questions brought before the House. I should like at the outset to refer to a few of the arguments brought forward by the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) and also the question which was raised by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot). In regard to the latter I may say it has always been conceded by the most ardent prohibitionist that in any prohibitory law enacted we would have to exclude the wines and liquors used for sacramental purposes, and also those used