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NOTES ON RECENT PUBLIC MOVEMENTS.

TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION.

The most hopeful advocates of prohibitory legislation have been agreeably disappointed by the reception which their cause has met with in the Legislature of Ontario. The House of Assembly was flooded with petitions in favour of the Maine Law (369, with 23,000 signatures), and the members evidently felt the pressure of a strong public opinion behind them; for not only was the matter treated with all possible seriousness and respect, but different speakers vied with one another in their declarations of the need of something being done to stop the ravages of drunkenness.

The Government introduced and carried a bill to establish an Inebriate Asylum (at Hamilton); and Mr. Bethune, M.P.P. for Stormont, was equally successful with a measure for the interdiction of habitual drunkards, by which they will be debarred, like insane persons, from the management of their property, and placed under personal restraint, upon the order of a county judge. The License Act has been so amended as to make the detection and punishment of unlicensed dealers more easy, to provide for detective officers, to increase the penalties for violating the conditions of license, and to tax the trade for the support of the Asylum.

Attorney-General Mowat, however, and the Speaker of the Assembly, concurred in the opinion that it was not competent for the Provincial Legislature to enact a prohibitory law, inasmuch as this was a matter of "trade and commerce," which subjects, by the "British North America Act, 1867," are expressly reserved for the Dominion Parliament. The bill introduced by Dr. John Clarke, of Simcoe, M.P.P. for Norfolk (son of our old friend, Rev. W. Clarke), was, therefore, ruled "out of order," and had to be dropped.

On motion of Mr. Fairbairn, however, member for Peterborough, a memorial was adopted by the Assembly to the Parliament of Canada, reciting the presentation of so large a number of petitions in favour of prohibition, and praying the passage of such a law by the Legislature at Ottawa.

At Ottawa, also, a very large number of petitions has been presented directly