

governmental machinery; but until the community is so far educated that there is a statistical or economic association in every parish, we can hardly hope for the fullest information. Consumption is in its nature a private concern, and man will require to be much more methodical than he is at present before we can present anything like a picture of the consumption of a people. At the present time we are compelled to use what information we have as an indication of the complete result; and generalizing from the experience of individuals, treat the consumption of certain articles, for which the government provides statistics which may be relied upon, as representing the whole.

It is necessary first to shew in what proportions the people of Canada expend their incomes, because otherwise we should not be able to estimate the importance of the results obtainable for the consumption of specific articles. If the total expenditure of a people on food amounts to no more than fifty per cent. of its income, an increase in the consumption of coffee will mean a less increase of prosperity than it does for a people which spends seventy per cent. of its income on food. In the latter case it means that the people are rising from the lowest class, where the necessities of life absorb the greatest part of the income, to a condition where other considerations are becoming important; in the former case it may mean a change in the form of consumption only. This aspect of the question has some immediate practical importance. In the discussion of the financial aspects of prohibition, little attention has been paid to the fact that not all the expenditure of the Canadian citizen is on taxable goods. Prohibitionists claim that the fifty million dollars annually spent upon intoxicants will necessarily be spent on other articles, and that the government need not confuse the issue by dark suggestions of direct taxation; for consumption will not be reduced, but simply changed. But, though the same amount will still be spent, it does not follow that it will be spent in such a way as will provide a revenue. In so far as it is spent on food, there would be an increased consumption of food-stuffs on which, while the consumer may be paying a tax in the shape of enhanced prices,