

engage in an industrial pursuit, but with regard to the manufacture and the sale of intoxicants you undertake to regulate them by a legislative enactment and you license certain parties, upon the payment of a certain sum, to do certain things which you do not permit the majority to do, and their business can only continue so long as the Legislature sees proper to grant licenses in the matter. Now, the hon. gentleman seems to think that there is a great deal of public spirit in a few glasses of whiskey. He told us how much more generously people who drink act in regard to public matters than those who are disposed to support prohibitory legislation. I do not agree with him. In my opinion, it is simply a question of how far public opinion will sustain us. We know that in every town, in every village, in every large municipality, there are a certain number of persons who are supported by poor rates, and we know that in nine cases out of ten these people have been reduced to destitution on account of drink. In a great majority of cases in the towns and cities those who are dependent upon the charities of the population have been brought to that condition by dissipation. If that be the case we have a right to protect ourselves against such a state of things. You do not recognize the right of a man to establish a powder-mill at your door. You do not allow him to create a nuisance, and you seek to protect yourself against the wrong that would be inflicted upon you in this way. When the manufacture and sale of a particular article imposes burdens upon the community, they have a right to protect themselves against those burdens by saying that parties shall not engage in a business which produces those results. A few years ago we refused to certain parties leave to engage in the manufacture of gasoline, or something of that sort, in the vicinity of towns and cities, on the ground that it would be dangerous to the property of others. In precisely the same way we have the right to protect ourselves against the mischiefs that result from drunkenness. The only question the Legislature has to consider is whether the measure on the Statute-book will prove efficient. In my opinion, the measure has not yet had a fair trial, and until it has had a fair trial it would be premature to pronounce against it.

Mr. STRANGE. The hon. members for West Middlesex (Mr. Ross) and Annapolis (Mr. Longley) have given some statistics which I consider to be incorrect. They have asserted that only two hon. gentlemen in this House are entitled to sit here by a majority of the votes in their respective ridings. I have gone over the list as given in the "Parliamentary Companion," and I find that seven hon. gentlemen obtained more than a majority of the votes, viz.: the hon. members for Cape Breton (Messrs. McDonald and McLeod), New Westminster (Mr. McInnes), Quobee County (Mr. Caron), Victoria, B.C. (Mr. DeCosmos), Yarmouth (Mr. Killam), and Muskoka (Mr. Cockburn). In the constituency of Muskoka, represented here by an advanced Liberal, I find the total number of voters to be 1,986, of which the hon. member received 1,259. There must be some peculiarity in the way voting is conducted in that riding, for I find that the unsuccessful candidate received 1,196 votes, also more than one-half the entire number of voters.

Mr. BLAKE. I simply wish to say that while I am of opinion that there is a great deal to be said in favor of the view that to secure an effectual and beneficial enforcement of this law a very strong and also a diffused majority is required, I am equally of opinion that the measure now proposed, although several hon. gentlemen have no doubt with the utmost honesty declared that such is not their view in their support of it, is not merely calculated to give us the benefit of the law in cases in which there is a strong majority in its favor, but is calculated to prevent the law having a chance to become operative at all. I think that

is sufficiently demonstrated by the statistics to which the hon. member for North York (Mr. Strange) has alluded. It is quite clear that the case to which he has drawn particular attention is one in which the "Parliamentary Companion" must be in error, because, as he has properly observed, it is quite impossible that each of the candidates can have polled more than one-half of the total number of registered voters. I do not know whether there are any other errors in the "Parliamentary Companion," nor have I looked at the poll returns to find if the hon. gentleman's statement is correct. But I will assume it to be so, that six or seven out of the 206 members have succeeded in polling one-half of the total number of voters in their constituencies, yet that would not at all prove that we could give practical effect and operation to this law. Now, Sir, I have looked a little at the statistics upon this subject, and I took the trouble to run out the figures of the returns of the hon. gentlemen who during last Session voted for the amendment of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Boulton), which is in the form of a Bill now; and I found that the number of registered voters in the constituencies of those 90 members with respect to whom the statistics could be obtained—for some had been elected by acclamation, and in two cases there was no complete report in the return—was 344,291, of which one-half would be 172,147; but those 90 gentlemen polled 125,344, making a slight deficiency of 46,810, and leaving their poll equal to about 36½ per cent. of the registered voters of their constituencies. The hon. member for Cardwell (Mr. White) said that he assumed it was 40 per cent.—I have shown that it was under that—and that he said was a satisfactory exhibit, because political opinion is very much divided. Well, on the whole, political opinion is very much divided; but there are constituencies, as we know, in which political opinion is very much on one side, and when you find such an average result as I have referred to in 90 constituencies—and I presume that will be the result all round, because that number of constituencies was not taken from one side but from both sides, not from one Province but from all the Provinces—when you find about that rate, coupled with the circumstance that of those 90 members only one had polled a majority of the registered electors, you find that a majority of the registered voters is a thing, under our present system, practically unattainable; and therefore, you are practically, if this Bill passes, placing a barrier not to be passed over to the operation of the law. Now, as regards the 90 constituencies to which I have referred, or as regards all the constituencies at present held by the Conservative party in the Province from which I come—and I ran out the figures with very similar results to those and not one of them had a majority of the whole vote—that though there are many constituencies in which public opinion is overwhelmingly in favor of the Conservative party, yet you do not get out a majority of the number of registered votes in all the excitement of a popular election, even in constituencies where an active campaign is carried on. If there is not, among the 64 or 65 members returned in the Conservative interest in Ontario, a single instance in which a majority of the registered votes has been obtained, will it be fair or reasonable to argue that in those cases these gentlemen returned had not the support, really, of a majority of the voters in their constituencies? We know they had the support almost invariably, however small the majority by which they were returned. There are in many cases a residuum of non-voters, as the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) has pointed out, but as a rule the residuum is not of such a character as would have turned the election. There are some cases, but they are exceedingly rare, in which the residuum unpolled was of such a complexion as would have turned the election. The conclusion I draw is, that experience in this country has established that you cannot, no matter how strong the sentiment, get