

municipal Councils have exercised this power in the past. For example, in 1887 the Council of this city in one by-law, cut off 74 tavern licenses and 16 shop licenses. The Council of Hamilton in 1894, by a by-law, cut off 19 tavern licenses and 10 shop licenses. In London in 1892, through existing procedure of reduction by by-law, there were cut of 7 tavern licenses and 4 shop licenses. In Ottawa only last year—a few months ago,—provisions were made for cutting off 15 tavern licenses. So that this retaining in the municipal councils the power to reduce is no idle power given to them. They have used the power, and have used it so as to cut off 105 taverns and 30 shops in the four instances; and I have only given some of the instances of the kind which, if time allowed, I might cite to the House.

The other side to this question is that only a few municipalities have availed themselves of this power. We learn this lesson from that fact, viz: that public sentiment is perhaps not advanced far enough to warrant this House in making a more extreme provision as to this population limit than we are now asking the House to adopt.

Some weeks ago I attempted to get some useful information from our License Boards in the 97 license districts. I have been able to get information from 45, nearly one-half of the Boards, and 438 municipalities, which is more than one-half of the total number of municipalities. The information I have I believe to be instructive and I know it will interest honorable members. The information comes from 433 municipalities. Out of that 438, 105 have heretofore taken advantage of the power given to municipalities to reduce the number of licenses by by-law, so that one-quarter of the number of municipalities we have heard from have taken advantage of that provision of the law, and only one-quarter. Now still further, in seven out of these 105 which passed by-laws, no limitation was provided as to the number of taverns; and in 68 of them, half of the 105, there was no limitation as to the number of shops. But this other fact is very interesting, viz., that in 35 cases the municipalities through their Councils reconsidered the by-laws. Now what did they do upon reconsidering the question? In twenty out of thirty-five cases, the municipal Council in reconsidering the conclusion they had previously come to, extended the limit and granted more licenses; and fifteen did the reverse, and reduced the number; shewing that perhaps it is wise to go slowly, inasmuch as it