

members will very well remember, the fact that the *Globe* newspaper, in 1851, sent two correspondents into the State of Maine, that State which has always been quoted as the best example of a total prohibition of the liquor traffic. Those two gentlemen were, one in favour of total prohibition, the other in favour of the liquor traffic; and I will quote to the House, not the evidence of that gentleman who was in favour of total prohibition, but that of the other one who was against it, and I think the evidence which he sums up, is conclusive as to the fact that, although certainly liquor is sold in Maine, liquor no doubt can be obtained there and is drunk there, still, on the whole, the Act is really and practically enforced. This gentleman wrote :

"Our work in Maine is now published, and before commencing enquiries in other States it may be well to sum up my conclusions, while the impressions left by our two weeks sojourn are yet fresh and distinct. I realized perfectly well that the results at which I have arrived will not be apt to please either party. I do not write with the object of doing so, but simply to tell the plain truth as arrived at from personal observation, interviews with those whose opinions were likely to be of value, and consideration of the question in all its bearings. I shall not attempt a review or recalculation of details, but present my conclusions in the form of a series of brief propositions, as follows:—

"That in the cities the law has been a partial failure so far as uprooting the traffic, or even the suppression of open bars is concerned.

"That this failure has been greatly exaggerated by quoting exceptional places or periods as typical of the whole State, and by the ingenious perversion of statistics.

"That in the rural portions of the State of Maine, law has suppressed open drinking and reduced secret drinking to a minimum and may therefore be considered as effective as any other measure on the Statute Book.

"That after thirty years, the opinion of the State is so strongly in favour of the law that no political party is willing to risk its future by advocating a reversion to license, and that on the contrary the Legislature is continually strengthening the law by more stringent amendments.

"That the class of liquor sellers who defy the law are the same class of men who, under a license system, would sell liquor without license."

I will not weary the House by reading the whole of his summing up, but I have taken out the salient features, and in omitting the rest I have not left the weaker or poorer paragraphs. I think, Sir, that this evidence is such as will successfully refute the assertion of so many people, that it is obviously futile to try and interfere successfully with the liquor traffic. I have here another quotation which I will not, however, read to the House, a quotation from a book by Hepworth Dixon, on America, in which he alludes to the State of Vermont, and especially to the little town of St. Johnsbury, with which I am myself familiar, and which he there describes as a workingman's paradise. In that little town is the Fairbank's great scale manufactory, and a large portion of the inhabitants are working people, 500 operatives having employment in that factory alone. Mr. Dixon says that those working men who are thus employed appear to consider total prohibition as their best friend; that they themselves will be among the last to aid any attempt to have the law repealed. He describes the town as being absolutely and totally a prohibitory one, going so far as to say that when he desired to obtain a glass of beer he had to get a pint bottle from a druggist and secure a medical certificate in order to obtain it. Here is evidence not only that prohibition does prohibit, but also that people are benefited by that prohibition, and that even the working classes, those who are supposed to be the last to approve such a change, are really those who do appear the most decided that the law shall not be changed. Mr. Fairbank, manager of those large works, attributed to a great extent, the efficiency of his men to the fact that they could not obtain liquor in the town, and were compelled to abstain. I have also here another quotation, which I will read to the House; it is also in regard to the State of Vermont and the State of Maine. I allude to the report of an English gentleman, who went out to the United States, Hon. William Fox, an ex-Prime Minister of the Colony of New Zealand, who was travelling through the United States, and visited Maine

Mr. FISHER.

and Vermont for the express purpose of finding out how the prohibitory law worked there. He was, he says, against the principle. He did not believe that such a law could be satisfactorily carried out. But he here says :

"To sum up the whole, and admitting all the facts I could get from Mr. Murray, I believe the conditions of the States of Maine and Vermont to be much as follows:—If the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, and all the country justices, mayors, and aldermen of Great Britain, and a small number of the lower classes, perhaps 200,000 out of the population of 28,000,000, drank, and all the rest did not, you would have a state of things analogous here to what they are in Maine and Vermont—you would have a very small fraction who would get and use liquor, furnishing those shocking examples which some persons are in the habit of parading before us as existing in those States, but the whole of the rest of the population would be sober. The effect on their general condition is something marvellous—a total absence, externally, at all events, of all those vices and crimes which we meet with amongst drinking populations, which is very agreeable and very surprising. The impression left on my mind by my visit to these States was a full confirmation of the statements made to you by the hon. Gen. Neal Dow, and the documents which have been put forth—that in Maine and Vermont, on the whole, the prohibitory law has been a great success; notwithstanding that it has been more difficult to carry out, because of its non-permissive character."

Here, Sir, I think, is an accumulation of evidence which is quite sufficient to show that in those places where there is total prohibition it has been successfully carried out. But I find, too, that where a partial prohibition has been carried out, it has had an extraordinary effect in decreasing the amount of drinking. One of the most curious, and, at the same time, one of the most convincing, evidences of this fact, was found in Scotland in 1854, at the time that what was called the Sunday-closing Bill was passed. We have the evidence of the Provost of Edinburgh to show that at that time, in consequence of the operation of that Bill, which stopped the people from drinking for just one seventh of the time, just one-seventh of the liquor drinking was stopped. We find that in that time about six-sevenths of the liquor was drunk which was drunk before, showing that by stopping the sale of liquor one day out of seven you stop the use of liquor in about the same proportion. I think it is not an illogical inference to draw that if you stop it for the succeeding six days, it would almost, eventually and absolutely stop the drinking of liquor entirely. There is one more argument which I have to bring before you to-night, Sir, and that is, why we should prohibit. I am not going into the argument which the hon. member for King's (Mr. Foster) so elaborately discussed the other night, as to the physical evils of intemperance. I am fully and firmly convinced that even the ordinary use of intoxicating liquors is bad, physically, for the individual who indulges in it. We were shown the other night a large mass of evidence, which tended to prove that the medical fraternity, throughout the whole country, endorse this view, and that they go farther, and say that it is absolutely injurious to the public health that liquor should be allowed to be consumed. There is, it is true, on the other side, a large amount of evidence from medical men, to the effect that the moderate and ordinary use of liquor is not injurious, and however much I believe with the former, and not with the latter, still I am not going to make use of this argument, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining absolute proof in regard to it; but I wish to view it, as nearly as possible, from a practical, business standpoint. If we can show to the community at large that by reason of this traffic, from day to day, from week to week, and from year to year we are losing an enormous amount of material prosperity, I think we have the most convincing argument to the people of the country that this traffic should be done away with. In a new country like this, we should do everything we can to assist in building up and developing it; and if it can be shown that a large amount of energy is wasted in this traffic, that it contributes to the waste of an enormous amount of our material and vital energy, I think we have the strongest and most convincing argument that the traffic should be done away with. In trying