

defended by the law of the land? If it be right thus to engage in perpetual conflict, it can only be on the ground that the law itself is morally wrong. Moral truth and moral right are inviolate, and laws which are based on the eternal principles of righteousness, cannot be assailed without injury and defeat. The universal voice of Canada and of the whole civilized world declares that moral suasion against intemperance is right, not wrong. The laws therefore which in their very nature are calculated to increase and spread the vice of intemperance are radically defective, and ought to be abolished. In a certain state or condition of the country, moral suasion may be the only feasible and practicable plan of operation, and will always be necessary, but when by its various organizations public opinion is formed against the manufacture, sale and use of strong drink, then the law should harmonize with what is morally right, and be brought into that form by which from the beginning it should have been characterized. Canada is now come to that position, that an entire reconstruction of our license laws is rendered necessary, in consequence of the advanced enlightenment and moral requirements of the population, and now moral suasion itself respectfully appears before the legislature and asks, not relief from moral exertion, or the ordinary toils of an enterprise affecting the minds and morals of society, but that the legalized impediments to success may be removed, and that the traffic in intoxicating liquors may be prohibited under penalties as severe as the vice is great. The comparative inefficiency of moral suasion alone is painfully demonstrated in the case of Ireland. There some years ago astonishing success crowned the labours of the temperance reformer. Thousands, if not millions were induced to take the pledge of abstinence, and there was a great diminution in the manufacture and sale of the common drink of the lower classes. But the law remained as before, and by statistical information, it is seen that recently there has been a shocking increase in the consumption of ardent spirits and a fearful return to destructive habits. Had the law harmonized with the improved moral convictions of duty entertained and manifested by the people, there would have been a permanent reformation by the removal of those temptations to vice and immorality which present themselves at the corners of every street in every city, town and hamlet of the land. Let these be abolished and prohibited, and the law faithfully executed, and then the moral agencies employed for the public would be untrammelled and unimpeded. Canada supplicates at the hand of her own legislature that measure which in its operation shall annihilate the mischiefs produced by

the indiscriminate traffic in alcoholic beverages. This appeal is made with confidence in the rectitude of the principle comprehended in the numerous petitions which you will have the honor of receiving from your constituents, and not without hope that the prayer of the petitioners will be favourably entertained and a bill prepared and passed which shall give to Canada freedom from the baneful effects of a business, ruinous to all the dearest interests of our beloved country.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATURE.—You will know how easy it is for those who are adverse to the temperance cause to raise the cry of unconstitutionality. They will be joined by those whose craft is in danger. A prohibitory law is unconstitutional they will say—It invades personal rights—it destroys property—it endangers liberty!! But it may be asked, how many thousands have been robbed of their right by the law as it now stands? How many millions worth of property has been destroyed through the sale of liquor? Liberty and life have been sacrificed in ten thousand instances, as the direct and indirect fruit of our present system of legalized indulgences. It is not unconstitutional to change laws which are found to be oppressive. It is not constitutional to aim at the diminution of public vices and private wrongs. It is not unconstitutional to protect our wives and children against widowhood and orphanage. It is not unconstitutional to prevent individuals from trespassing on the rights of others. It is not unconstitutional for society to protect itself against the rapacity and avarice of mercenary men. If it were so in any of these given cases, then on our statute book there is a mass of unconstitutional laws. But, no! the law we seek is not unconstitutional, but we do earnestly aver that *the present license laws of Canada* ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL. Tried by whatever is duly recognized as part and parcel of the British Constitution. The Magna Charta—The Bill of Rights—Habeas Corpus—The Common law—The Law of Equity—the Criminal law, and the various laws affecting general and special rights as between man and man;—tried by these license laws, authorizing and regulating the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, are unconstitutional. By them alleged rights have been created, which are opposed to the public good. By them murder has been instigated and robbery committed. By them involuntary taxation has been imposed on society. Through them violence, riot, destitution, wretchedness, disease and mortality have originated and spread. The great question then is; shall this system of oppression and cruelty, of public and private iniquity be continued? Or will you, Gentlemen of the Canadian Legislature—