

On motion of the Rev. B. B. Keefer, the reports of the Provincial branches were referred to the Committee on the State of the Work.

Mr. McLaren, Q. C., then spoke as follows on

“THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE SCOTT ACT.”

The subject which I have been asked to open the discussion upon would be one of the most important coming before the Council. The experience of some years ago showed that the Temperance people in the Eastern Provinces and Manitoba knew how to carry the Scott Act. The experience of the last year has shown even more conspicuously than could have been expected that the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec also knew how to carry it. That work is going on so well that there does not remain very much for the Alliance to do in that line. To stir up our friends to secure the passing of the Act in every possible county and city seems to be unnecessary, as they are thoroughly alive to their duties in that respect. The question of agitation, then, may largely be dispensed with at present. He next referred to some of the difficulties which presented themselves to the enforcement of the Act. The doubt about its constitutionality, which hampered the friends in the East and paralyzed their efforts, have been fortunately removed. Other difficulties have been removed by legislation, which has assisted in perfecting the Act as a practical measure. Notwithstanding these improvements, there were matters, which had to be looked fairly in the face, and some difficulties, which the Alliance would be wanting in their duty if they did not call the attention of those who passed the Act to them, in order that they may be prepared to meet them. In regard to temperance legislation, the Parliament of this country has hitherto gone upon an entirely false assumption, in the main. Parliament passed Acts; but it compelled temperance people to enforce them. I have respectfully protested against this state of affairs. (Applause.) Offences against this Act are not offences against Temperance people or against Scott Act people, as such; but they are offences against the dignity of the law, against the community in general, and against society. If any offences against the person or property are committed, the law has recognized officers, whose duty it is to see the law enforced. There are tenfold stronger reasons why Parliament should supply all the machinery for enforcing such a law as the Temperance Act of 1878. (Applause.) Offences against that Act are offences against the dignity and supremacy of the law, and *prima facie* offences against society as a whole. For that reason the exponent of the law (Parliament and Government) should have representatives, whose duty it should be to see to the enforcement of these laws. It would be more reasonable to claim that those people who are particularly opposed to dynamite should not have officials to bring dynamitards to justice. I would lay down the proposition, in the first place, that the Government should supply the machinery for the enforcement of the Act. All friends of good government should insist that there should be appointed in connection with the enforcement of the Scott Act officials who are heartily in sympathy with it. One of the greatest defects that now remains, and which is the greatest obstacle to the satisfactory enforcement of the Act, is the clause relating to the giving of liquor under doctors' certificates. The sessional papers last year showed how that privilege was abused in Halton. In some places the Act was brought into disrespect by hostile and unscrupulous medical men, who, in some instances, it is alleged, actually thrust these certificates on people, in order to bring the Act into disrepute. Some amendments are required in this respect. A penalty should be imposed upon any doctor who should give any bogus prescription to obtain liquor. The question is often asked, Can the Act be enforced? I can only say, in reply, that from recent investigation and inquiry in the County of Halton, and having passed through the late campaign, — having come in contact with many people in the county, notwithstanding the effects of fraudulent doctors' certificates, the Act was effectively enforced in that county. (Hear, hear.) From personal observation I can decidedly affirm that the Scott Act was an enforceable Act,