

time that so glaring and serious a defect in the Constitution should be removed, and that the power of disallowance, at least for reasons which are not imperial or diplomatic but legal or connected with commercial morality, should be entrusted to an authority the sentence of which would command the respect of all parties, as do those of the Supreme Court in the United States. Some statement of the principles upon which the disallowing authority was to proceed would of course be required at the same time. Legislation involving a breach of contracts, or a confiscation of private property, except in case of State necessity and with compensation, would be prohibited as a matter of course.

If there is not honour among our reporters, the very ground on which public opinion is formed will be cut from under it. The other evening a meeting of the Liberal Temperance Union was held in St. Andrew's Hall. It was numerous and respectably attended, nor could there be any doubt as to the predominance among the audience of sentiment in favour of the cause in the interests of which it had been assembled. The *Globe* gave a report, bearing throughout marks of a petty and unmannerly spitefulness against the Temperance Union and those who spoke for it, which it might have been thought that a journal which is now so respectably conducted would hardly have condescended to admit. The report concludes with these words: "The Chairman (Mr. Cattnach) then left the chair, stating that Mr. Tait had taken up too much time, and the meeting broke up, *not however until a resolution had been carried* to the effect that the Scott Act had been adopted in nearly sixty counties, and that as it met with the approval of the people it would be unjust to amend it as proposed by the Senate, and recommending that it be adopted in the City of Toronto." It is here obliquely stated that a resolution adverse to the object of the Temperance Union was passed before the meeting broke up. But the Reporter must have known perfectly well that no such thing took place, and that the resolution in favour of the Scott Act was passed by a small number of persons of that way of thinking, who, when the Chairman of the Temperance Union had left the chair and the meeting had broken up, stayed behind and held a little meeting of their own. The artifice of the form in which the statement is couched only marks a consciousness of its character. Has enthusiasm got the better of professional as well as of ordinary morality?

This attempt to nullify the significance of a demonstration of public opinion serves only to lend emphasis to the fact that public opinion has at last begun to manifest itself with something like freedom on the subject of the Scott Act. The great political weakness and one of the greatest dangers of communities in which the will of the majority is law is the fear which everybody has of not being in the majority. Too many people bow before any prevailing gust of sentiment like reeds before the wind. They have not yet learned apparently how easy it is to manufacture sentiment by means of an active organization and an apparatus of paid lecturers, platform oratory, and campaign literature combined with social and commercial pressure such as the promoters of the Scott Act have employed. The Scott Act Party has constantly refused the one decisive test, or rather it has virtually admitted that the verdict of the one decisive test would be against it, by resisting the proposal that an absolute majority of the electors should be requisite for the adoption of the Act. In this it has been wise in its generation; for the fact is, that while it has appeared to sweep county after county by overwhelming majorities, it has not had one-third of the electors in its favour. In an aggregate of counties of which the total electorate is 398,764 the total number of votes cast for the Scott Act was only 123,588. More than two-fifths of the electors have stayed at home. Those who thus abstained from voting cannot have been in favour of the law; at all events they cannot have reached that degree of conviction which alone will justify a man in imposing a sumptuary law upon his neighbours. The probability is that a great many of them were against the Act but were intimidated morally, if not in any other way, by the overbearing violence of the movement. They were afraid of being labelled and denounced as friends of drunkenness and supporters of the Devil's cause. Every Presbyterian and Methodist minister is under pressure which it is scarcely possible for him to resist. The politicians have, of course, gone with what they have taken to be the majority, some of them, plainly enough, against their own convictions, and the political press has been compelled, to a great extent, to follow suit. While one side has been intensely aggressive on the other apathy has reigned. Resistance has been left to the Liquor Interest which was, of course, at a great moral disadvantage, though the monstrous criminality of defending your trade and your bread against those who are trying to deprive you of them is not so apparent to the ordinary mind as it is to that of the Prohibitionist, who seems to think that a brewer ought at once to see in him the chosen instru-

ment of Heaven deputed to punish brewers for their iniquities, and at once go forth meekly with his family to starve. But a blow in favour of freedom of opinion in this question seems at length to have been struck by the formation of the Liberal Temperance Union, the organizers of which are entirely independent of the liquor trade. The Union is formed on the principles which its leading members have publicly maintained from the outset, and which are those of inspection, regulation, and the substitution of lighter and more wholesome beverages for ardent spirits. It thus, while keeping terms with human nature and aiming at nothing impracticable, offers a platform on which any citizen can stand without moral misgivings or fear of being branded as a friend of drunkenness. There is a prospect at all events for those constituencies which remain uncommitted of hearing something like a free discussion of this most important issue before they bow their necks to the yoke of the Scott Act. The Hon. J. B. Finch, of Nebraska, and his friends when they, with most Christian lips, revile the President of the Temperance Union as a "blackguard" and an Annexationist, pay a tribute after their own fashion to the importance of the Association, and show themselves conscious of a turn in the tide.

The Hon. John B. Finch, of Nebraska, must be well aware that if he has been rebuked, it has not been for lecturing or speaking on Temperance in Canada. He is perfectly welcome to lecture or speak on that or any other philanthropic or general subject. He has been rebuked and is, as we believe, condemned by all right-minded people for interfering between our Government and its citizens on the question of compensation, with which, as a foreigner, he has nothing to do, and with which the commonest delicacy would teach him to refrain from meddling; and at the same time for assailing with the most venomous abuse, and holding up as fit subjects of inhuman treatment, a body of Canadian citizens who have done neither him nor his country any wrong. Canadian soil is hospitable, but respect for decency is required here.

Fears are beginning to be felt in financial circles that the continued purchase and coinage of silver by the United States Government, at the rate of two millions of dollars a month, may so reduce the stock of gold in the Treasury as to make it impossible, before the year closes, to continue to pay the interest of the public debt in gold. There are people whom no one would suspect of being needless alarmists who contend that the time has come when the Government should make an arrangement with the banks with the view of preventing so dire a calamity. The banks, whose surplus reserves are greater than ever before, could, it is alleged, without serious inconvenience afford to exchange some of their gold for silver at bullion prices; but there are others who fear that Congress will not repeal the silver coinage law under any pressure less than that which would be caused by a crisis in the Treasury Department arising from an insufficiency of gold. The Silver Ring, far from being abashed, would rejoice at the dishonour of the nation, if the inability of the Treasury to pay interest in gold should set the precedent of paying in silver coin of the value of eighty-five cents in the dollar. Any temporary arrangement between the Treasury and the banks would be useless unless Congress be prepared to suspend or repeal the silver coinage law. In purchasing silver for coinage, the United States does what no other nation does; even the nations of the Latin Union merely receive for coinage silver sent by individuals for that purpose, and they do not coin silver so brought in unlimited quantities. The enforced coinage of silver, in the United States, is producing its natural result; the cheaper coin is displacing the dearer, as it always does whenever two coins of different values come into competition. To what extent the displacement of gold has been caused by the heavy coinage of over-valued silver may be a question. Some contend that if one hundred and eighty millions of silver dollars had not been coined under the law of 1878, an equivalent amount of gold currency, less the over-valuation of silver, would now be in the country. If the produce of the silver mines had been exported to the amount of over one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, it does not follow that a precisely equal quantity of gold would have been imported or retained; the silver coinage, being artificially enforced, does not measure the extent of a public want; the cheaper coin, to the extent that it has been used, either by going directly into circulation or indirectly through the proxy of certificates, has displaced the dearer coin. The displacement of gold is greater than the sum total of the coin used as a substitute, because the silver in the unused dollars has been paid for by gold; but, whatever it may be, it is great enough to threaten to deplete the national Treasury of gold and to make it difficult or impossible for the nation to keep faith with its creditors. In the face of such a danger, it is reassuring to know that at the head of the executive is a man who will do whatever he can to bring Congress up to the line of its imperative duty. Besides there are signs