

subject submitted and we had the deliverance of the House upon it, and that therefore it was unnecessary again during the continuance of the same Parliament to submit another resolution on the same subject. I may say that, when that resolution was presented last year, there was a very thin attendance of the House, and it was not a fair expression of the views of the House. I may also say that, since last Session there has been a serious change in the *personnel* of the House in consequence of vacancies which have taken place and have been filled by bye-elections. In addition to that, it is the desire and it is the determination of the promoters and friends of temperance in this country to keep this question before the Parliament of Canada and before the country at large. We are resolved that we will keep the question to the front, that we will educate the people and that we will agitate the people in regard to this question, and will agitate in Parliament in reference to it until we secure what we are striving to obtain, the entire prohibition of the liquor traffic. With these few remarks, I submit to the House the resolution which I have proposed, and I trust that it will receive that attention from the House which its merits demand.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). The hon. gentleman has brought this motion forward for the second time. Of course, if the hon. gentleman was prepared to propose a Bill to carry out the motion which he has submitted to the House, in case the majority supported him, there would be no objection to his putting a motion of this sort before the House, but it is hardly consistent with parliamentary practice that the hon. gentleman should ask the House to assent to this as an abstract proposition. The hon. gentleman has had for some time a Bill before Parliament to amend the Canada Temperance Act, but that is somewhat different in principle from the motion which he has made now. The principle of the Canada Temperance Act is very different from the principle which is embodied in this resolution, or in any Act which could be founded upon it if a majority of the House was found to favor it. The principle of the Canada Temperance Act is the principle of local option. It recognises that, in regard to any matter dealing with the licensing laws, each locality should decide for itself. When you come to legislate in regard to what may be regarded as a sumptuary law, you find that it is wholly inoperative unless it is sustained by a majority of the people in a particular locality. The measure to which I have referred was put on the Statute-book ten years ago by the Government of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie). That Government assumed the responsibility of putting that Act on the Statute-book, and assuming that responsibility they followed the principle which was laid down in a resolution proposed by the leader of the present Government, that it was the duty of the Government to assume the responsibility. They did assume the responsibility. The question whether we should place a prohibitory law on the Statute-book was made the subject of enquiry by the Government. They enquired into the operation of the law in the State of Michigan, and into the operation of the prohibitory law in the State of Maine, and also in regard to the operation of the prohibition law which was put, at one time, on the Statute-book in the Province of New Brunswick, and afterwards repealed, and the Government came to the conclusion that it was in the interest of temperance and in the interest of prohibition to adopt the optional law and not to adopt the law looking to total prohibition. I have myself always been in favor of prohibition, but I have never been in favor of the adoption of a measure that the majority of the people did not sympathise with. That would be inoperative, that would not in any degree suppress the habit of drinking, that would leave that habit as much in force as it was before, and would turn the sympathy of any district away from the cause of temperance and lead it in a direction where it would

try to set the law at defiance. For that reason I did not support the motion which the hon. gentleman proposed before. It seems to me that, before undertaking any legislation of this sort, we should know the opinion of the country on this question, and how are we to know whether the people in a particular locality will support the principle of prohibition or not? The hon. gentleman knows, or at least I know, that in my own constituency the Canada Temperance Act is in operation, and that there is no measure which it is so difficult to efficiently carry out as a prohibitory measure; and I know that, unless the overwhelming majority of a people in the locality favor the measure, it will do as little to suppress the habit of drinking to excess as if there was no such law at all. What we want is that the public sentiment should be in favor of prohibition, and then to follow it up by legislation which can be efficiently carried out. The Canada Temperance Act leaves it to the people in the locality itself to say whether they want prohibition or not. I know that in the rural districts, where it is tried, it works admirably. The farmers know that when their sons go out, they are not gathered in a drinking hole, they are not acquiring habits of dissipation, and that even those who are not total abstainers are not violating the law in any respect. But the towns and cities present a wholly different state of things. I am not at all sure that if you were to-morrow to try a measure of prohibition in any one of our cities, you would have as little drinking as you would have under a strict license law. Now, what the hon. gentleman ought to desire, and what the House ought to desire, is not simply and formally to put upon the Statute-book a law that is never put into operation, or that remains a dead letter, but it should be to put upon the Statute-book such legislation that the people themselves will sustain and will carry into operation, a law that is operative in favor of sobriety and good order, and not a law that excites opposition in a very considerable section of the community, the violation of which the people wink at, that will rather tend to a demoralisation and to a want of respect for law, than to good order and good habits in the community. Sir, holding this view, I would not support the motion of the hon. gentleman, not because I am not in favor of the principle of prohibition wherever the people are willing to carry it out, but because I am not in favor of putting upon the Statute-book a measure that would do away with existing restraints, and that would leave a very considerable section of the country exactly in the position as if there was no legislation at all. Now, when the hon. gentleman proposed to amend the Canadian Temperance Act with a view to making it more efficient, I think he was taking a step in the right direction; he was proposing to amend a law that is based upon wholly different principles from the resolution which he is now proposing. If, Sir, it were found that the people throughout a Province generally favored prohibition, I think the measure ought to be carried in that Province; if it were found to be so in several Provinces, then it would be well it should be carried in those several Provinces; if it should be found that the public sentiment of the entire Dominion were in favor of the measure, then it should be carried throughout the Dominion. But, Sir, it does seem to me that when in some of those localities in which the measure has been optional, it has been carried and afterwards repealed by a majority where it was formerly put into operation by a majority, it is scarcely a fitting time to propose to the House a measure of prohibition. This whole subject is entirely in the hands of the people themselves. Why, Sir, we know that the hon. gentleman proposed here amendments to the Canada Temperance Act, and they were kicked out in the Senate. The hon. gentleman said: "I will vote for an elective Senate." Well, Sir, I proposed in this House a resolution in favor of that view, and the hon. gentleman helped to vote it