

RECORD OF PARLIAMENT.

Votes on Prohibition During the Last Session of the Commons.

We boast of a system of responsible government unsurpassed, and profess to hold our legislators to strict account for the manner in which they discharge the high trust committed to them. Not as Prohibitionists only, but as citizens we are simply consistent when we demand that our representatives shall explain and justify their votes or accept the consequence—an adverse ballot at the first opportunity. As often happens, an issue may arise subsequent to the general elections, and the members of the House be called upon to take action without the electorate having an opportunity to express itself upon the same: for example, the Manitoba school question. Such, however, is not the history of Prohibition: that question has been long before the country and various expressions of the people's will have been recorded upon the subject—in Scott Act votes and Provincial plebiscites, etc.

FIRST SESSION—1891.

Nor was the question first raised in the expiring days of Parliament. The House met in its first session on April 29, 1891, and within three weeks thereafter, on May 20th, Mr. Jamieson moved, seconded by Mr. Fraser, the following resolution, previously approved by the Legislative committee of the Dominion Alliance:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when it is expedient to prohibit the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes."

The debate was not concluded when the Speaker left the chair. The following day, May 21st, Mr. Mackintosh (Ottawa) moved, seconded by Mr. Roome (North Middlesex):

Mackintosh Moves for a Select Committee.

"Whereas, the numerous petitions presented to this and preceding Parliaments, praying for the enactment of a Prohibitory Liquor Law, indicate a desire upon the part of a large portion of the population that the question should receive serious consideration from the people's representatives.

"That this House is of opinion that, as such petitions and reports made by various committees of Parliament, well allege that the social, moral and civil standing of the subject is imperilled by the existence of such trade in intoxicating liquors, immediate steps should be taken to obtain full and reliable information upon all practical and financial details connected with the question.

"That this House is fully cognizant of the immense loss of revenue which would, for the time being, follow the enactment of Prohibitory measures, not alone to the Dominion exchequer, but to the various Provinces of the Union, and the possibility of complications arising between the Provincial and Federal authorities consequent upon such reduction of financial resources.

"That this House, whilst desirous of moving in the direction of amelioration of evils complained of, is of the opinion that any legislation should be so safe-guarded as not to too suddenly disturb the revenue of the country or the vested interests claiming compensation.

"In view of the considerations, the House is of opinion that a select committee should be appointed to report upon all the details involved in the subject, more particularly:

"1. The annual loss to the Federal exchequer;



THE OLD BRITISH METHOD.

LAURIER AND FOSTER IN UNISON—"Electors of Canada! Look on this!! If you would change the division list, there is the Old British Method of sending representatives to Parliament who will vote the other way."

- "2. The amount invested in the manufacture of intoxicating liquors;
  - "3. The amount necessary to compensate those now embarked in the manufacture and sale of liquors, should such policy be deemed expedient;
  - "4. The amount of annual loss to each Provincial exchequer;
  - "5. The amount of annual loss to each municipality throughout the Dominion;
  - "6. An estimate of the probable amount requisite by taxation, in lieu of license fees in each Province and Federal Excise and Customs duties;
- "Together with all information obtainable touching the present cost of maintaining the various institutions for the suppression and punishment of crime throughout the Dominion:
- "Said committee to consist of Messrs. Coatsworth, Curran, Davies, Ferguson (Leeds and Grenville), Girouard, Gordon, Hazen, Jamieson, Mills (Annapolis), Mills (Bothwell), Prefontaine, Ross (Lisgar), Scriber, Taylor, Wallace and Wood (Westmorland) to report at the earliest period."
- Should First Consult the Electorate.
- Mr. Taylor (South Leeds) moved, seconded by Mr. McNeill (North Bruce), the following amendment to the amendment:
- "That all the words after the word

"That" in the original motion, and all the words of the proposed amendment be struck out, and the following words added instead thereof: this House renews the expression of its opinion, made in preceding Parliaments, as to the expediency of prohibiting the manufacture, importation and sale of alcoholic liquors for beverage purposes, but declares that, in a question of such far-reaching importance, affecting long-established social and trade interests, involving the loss of many millions of necessary revenue and the consequent imposition of new and heavy taxation, it is essential to the effectual working and permanent maintenance of such an enactment that the electorate of Canada should first pronounce a definite opinion upon the subject at the polls."

After recess a motion by Mr. Sproule (East Grey) to adjourn the debate was rejected by a vote of 65 to 74. Later in the evening, however, it was adopted by a vote of 98 to 80.

Another Postponement.

May 27th.—When the Order of the Day was reached Sir Hector Langevin asked, and Mr. Jamieson agreed, that the question be postponed to an early day.

June 4th.—Sir Hector Langevin again asked that Mr. Jamieson consent to