

be helped. Then comes in the doctrine that the individual must yield to the public good, and you have, at all events, given the individual whose interests are affected the opportunity of seeing the people and meeting them before the election, and at the election, and presenting and urging his case. As between the two questions I shall support most strongly the amendment, and I hope it will be adopted by the House.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). I regret exceedingly the course taken by the hon. leader of the Government on this question. I understood, from the public press, and statements made on various occasions, that the proposition of the Government was not to relax any of the restrictions placed on the liquor traffic. I think he has stated that himself, in this House, in the debates which have taken place upon this matter, and, at all events, it has been stated for him in the public press. Now we find that these restrictions are to be seriously relaxed. We have had it stated, over and over again, that in the Province of Ontario, for example, where the majority can veto a license, and where they have vetoed them year and year after year, there shall be no relaxation, but unless this clause is adopted, that privilege will be relaxed. The same remark applies to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island—in fact, to every Province in the Dominion—so that the proposition of the hon. gentleman is a very great relaxation of the restrictions which are at present imposed on the liquor traffic. The hon. gentleman says that people will be ruined if this petition system is adopted. What did the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Desjardins) say? It has prevailed in the Province of Quebec for many years, and has the hon. gentleman shown that people have been ruined by that system? Not at all. The hon. gentleman says the people will be ruined by the system of petition, but if the electors are allowed to go forward and cast their solemn vote, they cannot be ruined—in other words, they can be ruined by petition, but not by vote.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Where is the relaxation?

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). The relaxation is that instead of the simple and inexpensive process of option which prevails in that Province, the hon. gentleman proposes a more difficult and expensive one. He says we will have no respectable hotels if this prevails—we will have no Windsor House, no Rossin House. The Windsor House of Montreal, I believe, was built where this right of petition prevails, so that we have the example of one of the largest and most respectable of the hotels of the Dominion erected in the very teeth of the system which the hon. gentleman condemns. He says that the petition system is uncertain—that petitions may be presented without the other side being heard. We have in this country a very good understanding on both sides of that question. The people understand thoroughly well the effect of the liquor traffic in communities and the effect of prohibiting it. This is not a question upon which there is any necessity of arguing, for every person in Canada who has arrived at the age of maturity knows that the effect of increasing the facilities for drinking is to increase the amount of drinking, and the effect of limiting these facilities is to reduce the amount of drinking. The hon. gentleman says that vested rights must be respected. Does the hon. gentleman protect vested rights in every instance? In clause 42 the hon. gentleman proposes practically to reduce the number of licenses that can be issued, as compared with the number that can be issued in Ontario under the Crooks Act. As the hon. member for King's has pointed out, the various Provinces of the Dominion have a vested right in the legislation which has been conceded time after time, and the hon. gentleman now proposes to set aside the vested rights which sober and temperate communities have in that legislation in favor of the vested rights which a few hotel-keepers have in a few hotel buildings. I

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think the common sense of the people will be in favor of the vested right which the community has in that legislation which prevents the increase of intemperance and the evil consequences which arise from it. The hon. gentleman says that this is a Bill to license and not to prohibit, but assuming that it is, we have prohibitory as well as license enactments in this Bill. The very principle of limiting the number of taverns or hotels, is a principle of prohibition. You limit it in certain respects by requiring that there can be only so many hotels to so many inhabitants. We propose to go a little further and to say that if a majority of rate-payers declare that there shall be no hotels, then there shall be no hotels. The hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) stated that this is one of the best License Bills ever submitted; but if he eliminates this clause, will he be able to say that? I say that it will not be as good a Bill as the Bills they have in Nova Scotia, Manitoba or Prince Edward Island. It is destroying one of the most valuable concessions which were made to the temperance community when the Bill was drafted.

Mr. McCARTHY. Not at all.

Mr. ROSS. I say it is. It is reducing the effectiveness of this Bill so far as these various Provinces are concerned, and it is extending to Ontario the privilege which we have not now. We are charged with embarrassing the hon. member in his Bill, but we are only assisting him. He submitted a Bill and we want to help him carry it out—we are loyal to the measure. To use a common expression, the hon. gentleman is going back on his own Bill; he is embarrassing himself by taking a retrograde step, and we come to his support in the hour of his weakness by voting for the Bill in its integrity. I trust that the House having listened to this discussion so patiently at this late period of the Session and this late hour of the night will now be prepared to vote for the Bill as it was reported from the Committee.

Mr. McCARTHY. I wish to correct a mistake which I think the hon. gentleman who has just spoken, and my hon. friend behind me, have in regard to what are called vested rights in this law. It is quite true that the provision they speak of exists in the Province of Quebec. If that was the law before Confederation, nothing we are proposing to do in this Bill will alter that law. We are not taking away any rights; we are dealing with this question, because, according to the decision of the Privy Council, the laws passed in the Provinces since Confederation are unconstitutional; but if these laws were in force before Confederation, as I understood the hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Gigault) to say, we do not intend to take away anything from the effect of that law, and a saving clause may be introduced to that effect. In New Brunswick there is a similar law; but my hon. friend behind me, unintentionally, no doubt, misled some of us by stating that it was the same in all the other Provinces. Neither in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, nor Manitoba, nor in any of the Provinces except the two I have mentioned, is there a local option clause such as is mentioned here.

Mr. DAVIES. Yes, there is.

Mr. McCARTHY. No; there is power in these Provinces to petition against the granting of a license to a particular man.

Mr. BLAKE. In Nova Scotia no license can be obtained, unless two-thirds petition for it.

Mr. McCARTHY. Exactly; but that is not local option, as my hon. friend knows.

Mr. BLAKE. I know that it is local option of the most effective character.

Mr. McCARTHY. The hon. gentleman may quibble about the words, but that is a different thing from the law of local option, and my hon. friend knows it very well.