

# PROHIBITION IN NEW BRUNSWICK.

## Sumptuary Laws Have so far Failed to Prevent the Sale or Use of Spirituous Liquors.

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The question of prohibition is one that has been before the people of New Brunswick for more than half a century. As early as the year 1852 there was a strong prohibition sentiment in the province and numerous signed petitions were presented to the Legislature asking for the enactment of a law to prohibit the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors. Such a law was passed at the legislative session of 1855 and it came into force on the first day of January 1856. It has been generally understood that many of those members of the Legislature who voted for this law were not total abstainers and that it was passed through the House of Assembly under the idea that it would be defeated in the Legislative Council. The members of the Council, however, passed it not being willing to be made the victim of such a piece of political finesse. The law was very unpopular and six weeks after it came into operation and while the Legislature was sitting in 1856, a petition against it was presented by the magistrates, merchants, freeholders, citi-

zens and inhabitants of the City and County of St. John. This petition was signed by thousands in the City and County of St. John and among those who signed it were most of the leading citizens. The reasons presented against the prohibitory law in this petition are worth quoting and are as follows:—

“That your petitioners feel greatly aggrieved by an Act passed at the last session of your Honorably body, instituted “An Act to prevent the importation, manufacture and traffic in intoxicating liquors usually called ‘The Prohibitory Liquor Law.’

“That your Petitioners are respectfully of opinion that the law in question is in restraint of trade and opposed to the commercial policy of the Empire; that it introduces new and objectionable forms of legal procedure, and sets aside the long established and well approved laws of evidence; that it interferes with trial by jury; that it enables a single justice of the peace to impose very heavy fines and penalties, and forfeitures, and even imprisonment