

have given you a few choice morsels from the hon. gentleman's speech, descriptive of the temperance men of the Dominion of Canada. I am ashamed of them. I have given you a few choice morsels descriptive of such men as the hon. Minister of Finance, leading bishops, archbishops, clergymen, doctors of divinity, judges, lawyers, and other distinguished men—such men as Vice-Chancellor Blake of Toronto, Judge Jones of Brant, Professor Wilson of Toronto, and Principal Dawson of Montreal—such names as Sir Wilfrid Lawson of England—all insignificant men without common sense or common honesty—and I find myself here to-night in that classification. Well, Sir, in spite of these associations, in spite of the depressing effect which you can well understand, falls upon me in defending the Temperance Act of 1878, I propose, nevertheless, to call your attention to some reasons why that Act should be maintained in its entirety. My hon. friend, in proposing an amendment to the Scott Act, is acting adversely to public opinion. Every principle contained in the Temperance Act of 1878 was supported by a very large majority in the old Parliament of Canada in 1864. That principle was accepted by the people of Canada, and was never reversed by them. True, its application was enlarged, better machinery was provided for rendering it effective, but the public opinion of the people of Canada is that the majority in our municipalities shall have the right for themselves to say whether or not they wish the sale of intoxicating liquors to be sanctioned among them. Nor was the Temperance Act of 1878 forced upon this Parliament hurriedly. The matter was well considered. The agitation which culminated in that Act began by the appointment of a Committee during the Session of 1873. Petitions were presented from time to time in favor of that Act. In 1874, I find, by the report of the Committee of that year, 132,465 individual signatures were appended to the petitions laid on the Table of this House. Besides these, petitions were presented from municipal bodies representing a population of 478,756, as well as from the presbytery of Manitoba, from the members of the New Brunswick Legislature, from the Synod of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, from the Young Men's Christian Association of the city of Fredericton, from the Baptist Conference of New Brunswick, from the professors and students of Knox College, Toronto, from the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company, from the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church, from the Niagara Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and from the Ontario Legislative Assembly, over the signature of its Speaker. These were presented in 1874. They were renewed in 1875, showing that the public sentiment was ripening. I find in a report presented to the Senate, that petitions were received by the Senate bearing 349,294 signatures. Of these 302,012 were from Ontario, 140,308 from Quebec, 16,335 from New Brunswick, 13,622 from Nova Scotia, 3,174 from Prince Edward Island, 34 from British Columbia, and a petition was received from the Presbyterian Church, of the Province of Manitoba—so that every Province, in some form or other, called the attention of the Legislature to the necessity of some action being taken in regard to this question. Now, I hold that legislation secured after such a strong request, and after the careful attention of the Senate and House of Commons was given to the Act, is of such an important character that the House should hesitate before it unceremoniously destroyed the deliberate opinions of Parliament so expressed. Although the Temperance Act of 1878 is dated three years back, we can only be said to have had it for one year. It was only recognized to be within the limits of our Constitution during the winter of last year by the Supreme Court; yet my hon. friend from East York proposes now, although we have only had the Act enforced hardly for one year, although any evil that it might inflict upon the community

has not yet been ascertained, to set aside the deliberate opinion of Parliament as expressed in the Session of 1878, by an amendment to the Act which, by emasculating all that is excellent in it, practically destroys it. He proposes to do this before we have had any opportunity of ascertaining whether the Act is inefficient or inoperative. My hon. friend will not be sustained in this course by public opinion. Under what pressure is he acting? Has he presented any petitions to this House in support of the course he has taken? Before the Scott Act was placed on the Statutes, I venture to say that nearly a majority of the people of this Dominion, in one form or another, petitioned for that legislation. The very fact that the Local Legislature of Ontario itself, by a unanimous vote, petitioned for prohibitory legislation, taken in conjunction with the other petitions, proved that it was asked by a majority of the people. What evidence has the House to lead them to believe that the arguments my hon. friend advances in favor of the destruction—I use the word advisedly—of the Temperance Act of 1878, are backed up by the public opinion of this country? Allow me to say further, that my hon. friend is exceedingly anxious that this Bill should pass, because he is afraid that in the present form a majority of the people would tyrannize over a minority. Constitutional government, as I understand it, is founded on the principle of government by majorities. If, however, the objections of my hon. friend are well founded, instead of proposing to have the Temperance Act of 1878 carried by a majority of names in the voters' lists, he should propose a repeal of the Act. If this Act is wrong, if it is an Act of spoliation, if it outrages public opinion, if it destroys the liberty of the people, he should propose either compensation for those whose property is destroyed, or the repeal of the Act. If the manner in which the Act is brought into force inflicts a wrong on any municipality, would his Bill make that wrong right, because under it, the wrong would be inflicted by a majority of the names on the voters' lists? This is his position. His argument is inconsequential. If he argued according to the logic of his own facts, he would have to waive the position he advocates and say to the House: "The Temperance Act of 1878 is wrong in principle; it does injustice to vested rights; it is, as are all sumptuary laws, an injustice, and will end in failure. I, therefore, propose its repeal." But instead of taking this logical position, he says that the Temperance Act passed by a majority would be wrong; but if passed by a majority of names on the voters' lists, the wrong becomes right, and all the evil consequences that flow from a sumptuary law, its spoliation and interference and vested rights, would be right, and the Temperance Act of 1878 become a blessing instead of a curse. I commend his amendment to his reconsideration, and trust, if he proposes to attack the Act, he will attack it on its merits and not by a side wind. His Bill involves a further injustice. It does not propose the Act shall be carried by a majority of all the voters entitled to vote, but it says: "If the majority of all the voters whose names are entered on the voters' list used at such a polling place are for the petition, the same shall be held to have been adopted, but not otherwise." He is introducing a new principle, and he justifies the introduction of that principle by the sixteenth section of 21 of the 4-43 Victoria, Province of Ontario. That section says: "To render valid a by-law of any municipality for granting bonuses in aid of a railway, or for promoting any manufactures, the assent shall be necessary of the majority of all the ratepayers, who are entitled to vote on the by-law." There is some fairness in that, and it is from that the hon. gentleman says he has copied his Bill. If my hon. friend had proposed that the Temperance Act of 1878 should not prevail unless sustained by a majority of those who were entitled to vote, we would have had something to govern us all; but he proposes the Temperance Act of 1878 shall not prevail unless sustained by a majority of all the