

n intoxicating liquors. More than that, Sir; I wish to point out just a simple fact, which shows how this tendency is making itself felt. Why, I remember when, not long ago, a county by the name of Lennox, not very far from this city of Ottawa, made a turn round with reference to its political complexion, and by a slight majority elected a gentleman who at present sits in this House, that one half of the press of the country heralded it forth that a great change was taking place in the political aspect of the country, and that the change was indicated by this reversal of the vote. I remember, also, when the county of York, in my native Province, by a very significant vote, turned round on its former party allegiance, so to speak, and elected my hon. friend who now represents it here, by a large majority, it was heralded throughout the country by the other half of the press of the country, as indicating a very significant change. Let me call the to other attention of hon. gentlemen of both parties indications of a very significant change. Since the Canada Temperance Act, 1878, has been before the country, it has been submitted in forty counties and cities of this Dominion, and it has been carried in thirty-three of them. It has been lost by a majority in six, while in St. John, the commercial metropolis of my own Province, the vote resulted in a tie and the Act was lost. When I count up the votes upon that Act I find that there were cast in favour of it 45,080, and against it there were 23,606 votes, or as nearly as possible a vote of two to one in favour of the principle of prohibition. Will the hon. gentleman say that that does not sufficiently indicate the temper of the people of this country, that it does not afford a good ground for us from our place in Parliament to say that the principle of prohibition has a strong and entrenched hold in the hearts of the people, and that we are not going beyond what the indications have already given us a right to go. So much with reference to the necessity of prohibition. A word now with reference to the right of prohibition, as that has been called in question. As I said a moment ago, the legal right to enact and carry out a prohibitory law has been confirmed by the highest judicial authorities and courts in all Anglo-Saxon countries. I think, Sir, it is right, and I think so from one or two considerations. Some have stated that it is a sumptuary law, which enacts that you shall not say so and so, that you shall not eat such and such, that you shall not wear such and such clothing. Sir, the principle of prohibition, as applied to the liquor traffic, does no such thing. It simply deals with the public act of the manufacture, importation and sale, an act which is done for the good or to the detriment of the country, and if the country feels that it is done to its detriment, by all the sacred interests which that country guards, and by all the indefeasible rights which inure to every civilized Government, it is not only the right, but it is the duty of that country to have that taken away which is against its best interest. There is the whole question. Is it better for the country it should not exist? then keep it. Is it better for the country it should not exist? then do not put public patronage and public sanction beneath it, to uphold it by the sacred force of public law. Now others say this is class legislation. My opinion is that every kind of legislation you make is, to a certain extent, class legislation. The only thing we have to consider is to what class the legislation applies. If it is for the good of the greatest number, then the interests, financial or social, of the smaller number have to go down before it. That is the question we have to look at. Sir, let us look at the present state of legislation. We legislate to keep the distillery, to keep up the brewery, to keep up the liquor shops in our country, who employ altogether some 11,000 or 12,000 persons. Now, there is another class in this country, and that is the 4,400,000 and over, who do not make and sell liquor. The legislation we have at present is in

favour of the 11,000, but it is against the best interests of the 4,400,000. By the legislation I propose, the good of the greater number is sought, and if it is admitted that the good of the greatest number ought to prevail, then the interests of the smaller number must go down. The supreme object of law and the end for which law ought to exist, it seems to me, is simply that the greatest good ought to be secured to the greatest number. Sir, it is said that it is in violation of personal liberty. I, myself, am just as strong an upholder of the principles of personal liberty as any man can well be, but I know that it is apt sometimes to take the form of license, and what we denominate by the sacred name of liberty may become an infringement upon the rights of others who wish to exercise their personal liberty. There is a sphere in which personal liberty is sacred and ought to be kept inviolable. When it travels out of that sphere and infringes in speech or action upon the rights, the happiness, the pursuits, the prosperity of others, then it has to be hedged around, restrained, and circumscribed by what is for the good of others as well. So personal liberty has its sphere thus restricted, and within that sphere it ought to be kept inviolable. Sir, do we not infringe upon what some people call personal liberty in our other legislation. There is, for instance, a law upon our Statute Book which states that I shall not purchase a revolver, fill it with cartridges, and carry it about the street on my person; if I do so I am liable to punishment. Now, why is that? Because it is feared that in a moment of provocation or quick excitement I, having that deadly arm in my possession, might use it to the detriment of a fellow creature. The temptation may occur and I may yield to it, and harm would result. But there the law comes down, and public sentiment upholds it, and says that in the general interest I should be deprived of what I might consider my personal right. So it is with reference to quarantine; so it is with reference to a thousand other things that I might mention. Wherever they infringe upon public rights and interests, the public cries a halt and asks that they should be exercised, only in so far as they are not detrimental to the greatest good of the greatest number. Well, Sir, I think, then, without speaking further on this point, that it is competent to a country, by virtue of that preventive power which it possesses, to shield itself from enemies, within or without, by virtue of that protective power which every people has to look after and develop its best interests. We should carefully take away that which hinders their development. From all these considerations, it seems to me perfectly within the right of a people to prohibit a public act which a majority of them consider to be detrimental; therefore, on those grounds the people may prohibit the sale, or the manufacture, of strong drink which produces an infinity of mischief, counterbalanced by an infinitesimal portion of good. I think hon. gentlemen are sometimes very unreasonable in applying canons to test a prohibitory law which they would not dream of applying to any other law upon the Statute Book. A prohibitory law is but the creation of the people's voice, fallible as all other laws are. Now, Sir, do we expect a law to be carried out unless it has a fair chance for its enforcement? Do we expect, in the first place, that law should do more than to minimize the evil against which it is directed? Men cite prohibitory countries and say that notwithstanding the law, people can drink and people can sell, and they quote that as indubitable proof that the law has been a failure. Sir, that is not a fair test for a law. No law proposes to do more than to minimize the evils against which it is directed, and if we are reasonable, as I trust we are, we shall not ask that a prohibitory law shall utterly annihilate the evil against which it is directed, any more than we should ask that any other law should utterly annihilate the evil against which it is aimed. We have laws upon the Statute Book, but we have violations