

interest or that feeling of self-restraint and therefore it is the duty of the powers that be, whoever they may be, to try to protect the youth and surround him with those safeguards which we do in many other ways. There is no more deplorable thing than to see boys going through the streets smoking. I have often seen school boys just coming from school within a few feet of the school door stop and take out cigarettes and light them within sight of the school buildings, probably within sight of the masters. I do not know to what extent the teaching authorities do make an effort to restrain its use among the pupils, but I do think that evil has not been met sufficiently by either the home, the school or the church in this country to justify them in demanding from us, the parliament of Canada, the passing of legislation.

I am not prepared to wait for that time. Personally I am in favour of a law which might perhaps interfere with the privilege of the grown individual to use cigarettes if he wishes to, because in the interests of the youth of those who ought not to have this privilege it may be necessary, as in the case of other legislation, to restrict the privilege of some persons for the benefit of others, and I am ready to do this. As to the exact form of the resolution, I confess that as far as this motion is concerned, I do not feel that at this stage of the session we are in a position to draft and put through this House a Bill which would be likely to be a successful one. If my hon. friend would change his motion by making it read 'next session' I would hold up both hands for it and do all I could to see that the motion passed and that the legislation should be introduced and brought forward next session—speaking, of course, in my private capacity and not as a member of the government. I am speaking of course in my private capacity and not as a member of the government. It would be almost impossible to give this session that thorough ventilation to the whole subject which would be required in order to draft a Bill that would be effective. This session is coming to its close, and the time at our disposal would not be sufficient to enact practical legislation. If my hon. friend should propose this motion in the early days of next session, before Christmas, I should be glad to do all I could to put through a measure which would prevent the use of cigarettes by young people. Therefore unless my hon. friend should amend his motion so as to make it read next session instead of this, I cannot support it. I hope that a Bill of this kind will be brought in next session and passed unless we can find other means more effective than those now in force to lessen this evil.

Mr. J. BARR (Dufferin). My hon. friend (Mr. Fisher) has forgotten the old adage: Procrastination is the thief of time. If

Mr. FISHER.

we cannot enact legislation of this kind this session, I am very much afraid that we will not be better prepared next session than we are now. We all know that during the past few years there has been an agitation to lessen the evil, if not root it out altogether. During the past year various young women's associations have interviewed members of parliament to this end. So far as the province of Ontario is concerned, I do not believe there is a member here from that province who has not had correspondence urging him to support a Bill of this kind. Those desirous to stamp out this evil have gone further. They have endeavoured to exert their influence in the elections and obtain pledges from the various candidates. Under the circumstances, it seems to me the House is just as well prepared to-day to deal with this question as it will be at any future time. We know that the evil is increasing, and consequently every year it will be more difficult to deal with. It is no argument to say that the law now in existence in the province of Ontario has not proved effective. I think it has done considerable good. In my opinion our provincial law prohibiting the sale to minors of tobacco, cigarettes and cigars has greatly aided our school teachers in their efforts to stamp out this evil. Before that law was passed, our teachers had no power to prevent the children from smoking; but at present they can exert their influence against those who sell the cigarettes, they can follow their pupils to their homes, and the result is a considerable diminution of the practice. No doubt the importation and manufacture of cigarettes have increased during the last few years, but it must not be forgotten that our population has very largely increased, and I think it will be found that the use of cigarettes by our school children is diminishing. We have certainly accomplished something. And we have, as the result of this, a demand for more drastic legislation. This tobacco evil is no doubt responsible for many diseases among children and for many crimes committed by our youth. It is undoubtedly a source of decadence, and responsible for a good deal of physical and mental deterioration. I do not think that the plea put forward by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) should be entertained. If we do not legislate this session, how do these hon. gentlemen opposite know that they will have control of the House next session. We have heard rumours of the possibility of general elections before another session; and if there should be, the attitude of hon. gentlemen opposite on this and other questions may possibly induce the people to elect a more aggressive government which will pay better heed to the demands of the people. Besides we have no reason to believe that this session will close for a month or six