

We gratefully accept the proffered services of the Rev. R. J. Williams, on behalf of the *Advocate*, and regard him as one of our Agents in the Districts which he may visit.

We stopped Mr. Day's paper last year, because we had returned, from the post-office, seven numbers.

Canada Temperance Advocate.

MONTREAL, MAY 1, 1850.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

Our last number contained a communication from a correspondent in Oxford, C. W., dissuading from petitioning Parliament against tavern licenses, on the ground that "Parliamentary enactments are vain and useless" in promoting the Temperance reformation, and declaring to be his conviction, founded on experience, that, "if successfully carried on, it must be by the same power and persons that commenced it, and that have thus far supported it, namely, the powerful voice of public opinion amongst the middle class of society." We thank the writer for his communication. We think his letter valuable on account of the information which it gives respecting the actual state of the law, on the subject of taverns and tavern licenses, but we cannot agree with him in his conclusions. We, too, have "watched the progress of the Temperance cause in Canada, for many years; we have felt that the only effectual way of putting an end to the system of tavern-keeping, is to persuade all to adopt the principle of Total Abstinence, which will prevent them from attending and supporting such houses as customers; and, if the Legislature would stand upon strictly neutral ground, we would never ask its aid in prosecuting such an object. But we have felt that it is not neutral in the contest. By the system of licenses, as at present administered, it offers a powerful opposition to the spirit of our principles, and gives a powerful stimulus to the use and manufacture of intoxicating drinks. It has thrown the shield of Legislative authority over the intemperance-producing system; it has protected and nurtured it till it has reached its present gigantic dimensions; and we have a right to demand that it should cease to do so, and give us fair play, in endeavoring to reform the people.

The Select Committee of last Session declare, in their Report, that "one-half of the crime annually committed, two-thirds of the cases of insanity, and three-fourths of the pauperism, are ascribable to intemperance." And if the matter is so serious as this, it is obviously the duty of the Legislature to look into it, and endeavor to protect the interests of the community, by such preventive or remedial measures as their wisdom may suggest, especially, as they stand so closely connected with the system which produces these appalling results, by their tavern licenses.

Those very restrictive measures, which our correspondent enumerates in his letter, shew that Parliament is already aware that there is something which it can do, and ought to do, to abate the evils of intemperance, and it is quite competent for us to solicit Parliament to do this. At the same time they shew, that there is greater laxity in administering the law, than in making it. Many wise measures have been already enacted, but they seem to be so easily evaded in practice as to be almost a dead letter; yet this only renders it the easier for us to expose the abuse, to show how the authority of the Legislature is set at nought, and to request it to enforce its own enactments. We do not know how the mat-

ter stands in Canada West, but in this part of the Province it is used to be a very easy thing for a person who was refused a license in one quarter to obtain it in another. What effect the late Municipal Act may have, remains to be tried; but we know that there are also some localities in Canada East, where, if the question of *License* or *No License*, had depended upon the voice of the people, the majority would unquestionably have decided in the negative. In some parishes, the whole of the French population have taken the pledge under Father Chinquy, and his coadjutors; but having one or two old country families amongst them, they have found that they could not purge their village from the grog-shop; for these old countrymen could procure a license without asking permission from them, and thus force them to receive the *fireeaters* amongst them.

The fact seems to be, that the law is not so bad on the Statute book, as it is in the administration of it. Many of those prudential, restrictive enactments never go farther than the office of the Queen's Printer. But this, instead of preventing us from petitioning, should rather encourage us the more.

PETITION THE LEGISLATURE.

In answer to the repeated call of our correspondents, we submit the following form of petition to His Excellency the Governor General, and both Houses of Parliament. As it reads at present, it may suit both Houses of Parliament, with the substitution of the "Council" for "Assembly" in the address; and that for Governor will require the substitution, in the same place, of his proper address, which any J. P. will be able to supply; and in the body of the petition for "your honorable house," these words, "your Excellency." We are of opinion, that though it may be too near the period for the assembling of Parliament, to effect a very general expression of the public mind on this important subject, yet we are convinced the temperance community are already prepared to take definite action without much delay. The Rechabites and Sons of Temperance should take hold of the matter at once; from the nature of their organizations, they can act simultaneously, throughout the entire Province, without much delay, provided the form of petition we have given will suit the purpose.

The following form of Petition to Parliament is submitted:—

To the Honorable, the Legislative Assembly, (and Council) of the Province of Canada, in Parliament assembled.

The Memorial of the Undersigned,

Humbly Sheweth—

That in the Report of the Select Committee, appointed by the Legislative Assembly, during the last Session, on the subject of Intemperance, it is declared—that "one-half of the crime annually committed, two-thirds of the cases of insanity, three-fourths of the pauperism, are ascribable to intemperance." That your petitioners, fully convinced that this statement can be proved by facts, deem it a matter demanding the immediate and serious consideration of your Honorable House.

That, in the opinion of your petitioners, one of the chief causes of intemperance and its wide-spread baneful consequences, is to be found in the encouragement given by the Legislature to the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, by the *Spirit License* system; and that, therefore, steps should be immediately taken to reform, and ultimately to abandon this system, with a view to the substitution of one which shall render the vendors of intoxicating drinks liable for the evils their traffic may produce.

Your petitioners respectfully call the attention of your Honorable House to the evidence contained in said Report, that various salutary enactments already passed, with a view to restrict the number of tavern licenses, have been *systematically* evaded; and