

decisive majority of one hundred and fifty eight against one hundred and fifteen for the Union. The last scene of all was passed before almost empty benches, and the Speaker's voice was heard for the last time in the Irish House of Commons when he pronounced the Bill read a third time, and passed.

THE GOTHENBURG LIQUOR PLAN,

THE Gothenburg system of regulating the liquor traffic, says the *Boston Weekly Review*, has many advocates in this country. The system, briefly outlined, is the granting of a monopoly of licenses in any given locality for the retail and bar trade in spirituous liquors to a commercial company formed for the purpose by the "better element." These companies receive the monopoly in consideration of handing over all profits derived from the traffic above six per cent. interest on paid up capital stock. The surplus is used for the relief of rate-payers, being devoted to such objects as education, road improvement, and charity. In Swedish towns, seven-tenths of the surplus is paid to the municipality, two-tenths to the district court, and one-tenth to the agricultural society of the country. In Norway, according to recent statistics, twenty per cent. of the surplus has been spent for educational purposes, seven per cent. for charitable institutions, seven per cent. for road improvement, and two per cent. for the furtherance of the cause of temperance through subsidies to teetotal societies and other ways. In Sweden, the companies grant sub-licenses to proprietors of hotels and a few retail dealers, who are allowed to reap a small profit. In Norway no sub-licenses are granted, the companies placing employees in hotels and clubs to carry on the sale of liquor to guests or members.

According to a recent report to Congress, prepared by Dr. Gould, the statistical expert of the national bureau of labor, the Gothenburg system has been adopted by nearly all the towns of Norway, while in Sweden, out of ninety towns, seventy-seven have adopted it. Dr. Gould claims that

the system has diminished the consumption of liquor as well as crime, and has also caused an increase in the number of savings bank deposits and in the aggregate amount of deposits. Of course no attempt is made to *prove* that the decrease of crime and increase in savings bank deposits are the results of the application of the Gothenburg reform; the mere co-existence of the things is held to be sufficient warrant for inferring a causal relation between them. The ground idea of the plan, according to Dr. Gould, is to put the regulation of a recognized evil in the hands of the better element of the community, who shall hand over the profits received from it for social advantages rather than to allow persons who, to say the least, are endowed with an imperfect sense of moral obligation, to exploit it for private gain. That the "better element" has responded to the call and generously assumed the control of the "recognized evil" may be seen from the fact that the Christiania company, for example, contains among its shareholders one governor, two cabinet ministers, two royal chamberlains, one chief of police, two foreign consuls, two army officers, one teacher, five physicians, ten lawyers one member of parliament, seven government officials, twenty merchants, six manufacturers, and seven brewers.

The propriety of the Gothenburg plan of regulating the liquor traffic would not be determined by its apparent success or failure. Our condition would be wretched and hopeless indeed if we had to decide as to the propriety or impropriety of a proposal except by putting it into effect and watching its results. From the point of view of equal freedom, the Gothenburg way of regulating the liquor traffic is as objectionable as any other system of license and monopoly and restriction. Nevertheless it is interesting to find that not all the investigators of the Gothenburg plan coincide with expert Gould's view of its advantagelessness. We quote the following from the *St. James Gazette*, directing attention to the facts contained therein:—

"No scheme for the perfecting of the human race in the matter of drink looks more beautiful upon paper than the Gothenburg system; but, when it comes to be examined by the light of facts and exper-