

Editorials.

Tariff Mending vs. Prohibition:—

One of the most important events in the city of Montreal during the month of January was the large meeting of the Liberals in Windsor Hall, addressed by the Hon. Wilfred Laurier, Sir Oliver Mowat and Mr. Wm. Paterson, M.P. These gentlemen presented the platform of their party, and the last plank in it in the order of enumeration was Temperance, upon which we wish to say something.

Mr. Laurier read to the meeting the public questions upon which the Liberal party has a policy, and the manner in which he passed over Temperance, would lead us to believe that he thought it of little importance, or, at the best, did not want to give it public prominence. His voice did not dwell in strength and conviction upon it, like it did upon the words "Revenue Tariff," and consequently we think he did not begin to have the same regard for our subject as he had for the success of his reforming tariff; that he did not care so much for the overthrow of the liquor traffic, as for that of Protection.

With all due respect to Mr. Laurier and his colleagues, and thanking them for the promise of a Dominion plebiscite, we believe that their judgment here is not the best. We do not say that Protection should not be overthrown,—we are not here giving our opinion upon that,—but we say that the liquor traffic is such a financial loss to our country that it should be overthrown, and we believe that a much greater need of the times is the total suppression of that business than the reform of tariffs. Oppression from tariffs is an infinitesimally small evil compared with the damnable ravages of the traffic in strong drink. And we believe that the highest and best statesmanship calls for the abolition of this

business, and the setting-up of the era of total Prohibition. We laugh in derision at the herculean efforts that men are making to reform tariffs, to make themselves freer and richer, and yet they keep in their midst that which takes away tenfold more liberty and wealth than any tariff. The Hon. Mr. Paterson called and shouted that even-
ing for freedom, ay, yes, freedom, and yet, have we anything in Canada, except perhaps the love of luxury, that shackles us more than the trade in intoxicating liquors? If the politicians of both sides want to make Canada better, if their hearts would beat and bleed with the truest patriotism, let them give their attention to wiping out the liquor business, and after that, the tariff problems will soon be righted. Our opinion is that the use of liquor so deadens the moral sense of a nation that it cannot help legislating selfishly and doing wrong. If liquor be wiped out, men will recognize the right more distinctly, and be less selfish.

While politicians and statesmen give their attention to the mending of tariffs instead of to the liquor business, they are penny wise and pound foolish. We hear great complaints from Manitoba and the North-West, about hard times and financial stringency; there the Patrons of Industry have passed motions asking for the lowering of the tariff on certain articles of common use, the tariff oppresses them they cry. Poor fellows! Viewed from only the financial standpoint, and to state it mildly, there is five, yes, ten times the oppression upon them from the presence of the liquor traffic that there is from high custom duties. But the North-West is not alone here. Eastern Canada is fearfully cursed, wasting large sums of money. Take any of our towns, and in them we find that there