

DISTILLED AND FERMENTED LIQUORS.

Mr. FLINT moved for :

1. A statement showing the quantities of distilled and fermented liquors, under the different names as given in the Trade Returns, imported into and taken for consumption in Canada, from 1883 to 1893, both years included, computed in imperial gallons; the value of the same, and the duty paid thereon.

2. The quantity of distilled and fermented liquors, under the different names given in the Inland Revenue Returns, manufactured in Canada and taken for consumption therein; the value of the same, and the duty paid thereon for the same years.

3. The amount of materials used in brewing and distilling alcoholic liquors in the several provinces of Canada during the same years.

He said: This is a motion couched in exactly the same language as one which previously passed the House, and which brought the statistics asked for up to 1883. That return has been published. It is a very valuable return, and I desire that a return of a similar nature, bringing those statements from 1883 to 1893 may be furnished for the information of the House.

Motion agreed to.

BRIBERY AND DISFRANCHISEMENT.

House again resolved itself into committee on Bill (No. 6) to disfranchise voters who have taken bribes.—(Mr. Weldon.)

(In the Committee.)

On section 14,

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). This is not sufficient, because under our system a real estate proprietor can vote in different places, and if you disfranchise a party in one constituency there should be some public record to that effect, so that he could not go and vote in another constituency, otherwise the clause would be wholly ineffective with regard to that large class who vote in different constituencies.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. The promoter of the Bill is not here, but I presume there will be a clause added later on to provide for publication.

On section 15,

Mr. FRASER. I think that this clause should not be adopted. They have affirmed in England recently by one of the largest majorities ever given in the British House of Commons, that a matter such as this, being in the public interest, the public should pay for it. If our elections are to be purified here, they ought to be purified at the public expense. This Bill is, I believe, a good Bill in some respects, and this clause should be so amended that the public should pay the expenses of purifying constituencies.

It is unfair that twenty-five electors who honestly believe that wrong has been committed, should be bound to pay \$500 to do that which is no more in their interest than in the interest of any other elector in the county. I think it is time we should apply the British principle here.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I would again ask the Minister of Justice whether he does not think that we ought to return to the provision of a previous Act which was repealed some time ago; that is: that instead of this petition being presented to the judge it should be presented to Parliament, and then the expense would be charged against the public treasury, and not against the private individuals who petition. There ought to be no charge against these petitioners unless it could be shown that their petition was perverse, and that it was done rather with the intention to worry persons than to secure purity in elections. It does seem to me that undertaking to treat a great public duty as a mere private enterprise is not in the public interest, and not the way to make the law efficient. If we are to have efficient legislation, then the prosecution should be on the public behalf, and at the public expense. It is quasi criminal in its character, and as such ought to be conducted as are other proceedings in which the public are specially interested.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I would not take that view of it, nor will I be able to agree with the contention of the hon. member for Guysboro' (Mr. Fraser) that this should be done at the public expense. There are methods by which investigations shall be made at the expense of the public, and we might consider the propriety of improving them; but this is a public inquiry, made at the expense of twenty-five individuals who make a general charge of corruption against the county. I would not think it suitable in this Bill, that the twenty-five persons who make the petition should be able to put their hands on the public chest and make it a means of carrying out any investigation promoted by them. If they make such a general charge it is only fair in the public interest that they should pay part of the expense. The question will arise as to whether the sum mentioned here is sufficient, and I happen to know that the intention of the mover of the Bill was, when the Bill was in committee last, to draft another clause under which the petitioners should be required under the order of the judge from time to time as the investigation proceeds, to put up further amounts which he might order if he sees fit. In the meantime I think it would be well to pass this clause.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). If this petition were presented to the Speaker of the House, and the prosecution took place at the instance of the House as was the provision of the former statute, the investigation would be at the public expense and these parties would be simply petitioners.