

COLONIAL LEGISLATURE.

WEDNESDAY, April 4.

DEBATE ON THE TEMPERANCE PETITIONS. HOUSE IN COMMITTEE.

(Continued from Haszard's Gazette of April 7.)

Mr. WHELAN thought the resolution (Mr. Cooper's) did not go far enough, he did not deny the truth of the proposition, but the conclusions were not borne out by fact. He did not think the petition was a representation of the popular feeling, it was signed by a large number of females and boys, and taken altogether, was but a small minority, and did not furnish the House with a sufficient reason for the passing a Maine Liquor Law. It would be an infringement of the general liberty of the subject to pass such a Law, and they had no right to do so, because a fraction of the people had petitioned for it. He would admit, that drunkenness was a serious evil and caused much distress in the community, but that was a reason, that because a fraction of the people were unable to restrain themselves, that the House should be called upon to prohibit the use of liquor altogether; were all to be placed on the level with brute beasts, because a few people chose to make beasts of themselves? the majority are not drunkards, are the liberties of the people to be taken from them because a minority think they ought to have a Maine Liquor Law passed? He thought that entirely contrary to the spirit of British Legislation. There would be a great loss entailed on the Revenue, and the movers in this measure have not pointed out a means to supply this deficiency; they say indeed, that articles such as tea, coffee, cotton, &c., would be more used, and from these articles, an increased duty would be raised; but this is merely a matter of opinion, they have shewn no proof that such would be the case. They pointed to the ponderous petition, but it cannot be said, that it contained a majority of inhabitants, besides it was signed by women and children, and even men engaged in the traffic. A man from Georgetown who had signed it had spoken to him on the subject, and said that he hoped they were not going to pass the Maine Liquor Law; he had signed the petition only to get rid of the importunity; he did not doubt, but that there were other instances of a like kind. Laws of this description have been introduced and attempted to be put in force, but he believed that they were generally found to be nugatory. Such Laws induced lying, false swearing, and all kinds of shameful rascality, in order to evade them; and he thought it would be better to have drunkenness in a mitigated state, than to have it concomitant with all these evils. He did not know, how Hon. Members would vote, but he might tell them that Nova Scotia had given the Bill the go-by, and he believed that New Brunswick had not passed it.

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to pass any Law similar to that now in operation in the State of Maine, commonly designated the Maine Liquor Law, inasmuch as it would be an infringement of the rights and privileges of a free and enlightened people, and impossible to carry into effect, without the assistance of a force beyond the power of this Colony to procure, unless the neighbouring Colonies, British and Foreign, combine in its establishment.

Mr. CLARK considered all the arguments that had been used against the Law futile in the extreme. They had better testimony as to the working of the Law, than what the Hon. the Treasurer had given. Can we believe that the people, would year after year, vote greater numbers of Ministers into the office and House of Representatives, if they had not found the Law a benefit, and what were they doing? Why, every year making it more stringent. They shew, that crime has decreased, and that one tenth of the liquor is brought in and used. If you should turn out all the drunkards in the Island, in a week's time, there would be more new ones made, and such would be the case, as long as the traffic was sanctioned and upheld. Liquor does not increase the wealth of the people. No, it destroys the very sources of Revenue and wealth. We know the money spent in liquor would be spent in other more necessary things, and ultimately the Revenue would increase, as the wealth of the country became more permanent. Some Hon. Members thought it would produce lying and false swearing, they may just as well say the same of the present Revenue Laws, he thought it would not have any worse effect. He was not actuated by the number that signed the petition, he considered that all Legislation should lead public opinion, particularly when it was for the benefit and welfare of the people, he believed that a majority of his constituents were unfavorable to the Law, but when he voted for what was just, and sound, and politic, they might turn him out, if they wished. He read the opinions of Chief Justice Taney and other eminent judges, and he thought their opinions were well deserving of Hon. Members' consideration.

Mr. HAVILAND.—The State of Maine had never been celebrated for its fanaticism; he had never heard of any thing of the kind. But even if it were, that could be no reason, for Rhode Island one of the most enlightened states and the most like Britain in its constitution, had passed a Liquor Law. The question was an important one, and one which was of vital interest to the people of the Island. It must be admitted, that intemperance is the greatest evil that any country could be cursed with, that it is the greatest destroyer of happiness, and the most wasteful consumer of its wealth. The duty of the Legislature was to make such Laws as would best tend to the welfare of the people, if they passed such a Law, would it not tend to their benefit, physically, morally and commercially? Hundreds of families now in distress would be relieved, hundreds of wives in misery would be comforted, and hundreds of children now suffering in poverty and hunger would be clothed and fed. Hon. Members had great stress on the loss the Revenue would sustain, but was that any reason why the Legislature, was to countenance and uphold an evil prejudicial to the people? they had better run into debt, if that was the only reason, than deprive the community of the good effects of a Maine Liquor Law. He had very strong reasons to believe, that it would be the reverse, people would become better off, and more industrious, and of course more extensive consumers of useful articles. Commerce would not be liable to such fluctuations, for food would be more plenty, and less capital would be wasted. If the people of the Island were

against the measure, it was strange that not one solitary petition had been sent in against it, while they had before them one so numerously signed in its favor. The Hon. Member, (Mr. Whelan) thought it was only in the new world, that such a Law had been thought of, he could tell him, that it was engaging the thoughts of the ablest statesmen in Britain, he had only that morning read a spicy article in the North British Review; that publication considers the Maine Liquor Law is not such an absurdity as people try to make it, and it gave the evidence of those most capable of judging of the evils of an unrestrained trade in selling liquor. Lord Shaftsbury has stated, that after being 16 years Chairman of the Lunacy Committee, he had ascertained, that three fifths of the cases of insanity, both in Britain and America were from the use of intoxicating drinks. The Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet, has stated that since the allowance of spirits has been reduced to one quarter of the old amount, the number of punishments has fallen more than 70 per cent. Startling as it may appear, it is the truth, that the destruction of human life and the waste of the national wealth, which must arise from this tremendous Russian War, are outrun every year by the devastation caused by national drunkenness.

Mr. WARBURTON had always been of the same opinion with regard to the Maine Liquor Law; it was a mere humbug, and it did not prevent the sale of Liquor; in an hotel in Portland, he had brandy brought him before a hundred people. If such a Law were passed, it would be a loss of over £10000 to the Revenue, and they would have to put an additional duty on some other articles to meet it. The temperance people may profess to have a great many signatures, but many have signed the petition to get rid of the importunity, and others signed it because they knew it would not pass. He had prepared the following Resolution which he read, but he would not now press it on the Committee:

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to pass any Law similar to that now in operation in the State of Maine, commonly designated the Maine Liquor Law, inasmuch as it would be an infringement of the rights and privileges of a free and enlightened people, and impossible to carry into effect, without the assistance of a force beyond the power of this Colony to procure, unless the neighbouring Colonies, British and Foreign, combine in its establishment.

Mr. CLARK did not think Mr. Mooney's opinion worth a straw in any matter. Mr. COLES would not give a silent vote on the occasion. It was well known that the party opposed to him had made a great deal of Political Capital out of the Temperance Question. They went down to the Temperance Hall, and found they could effect something among the country people prejudicial to the Liberal party, and they subscribed a sovereign a piece to send Lecturers into the country districts, to do all they could to prevent the election of members on his side of the House. If the Bill passed last session, it was no reason it should pass now, but a small minority of voters had petitioned for its adoption, the greater part of them were composed of children and women, and he saw a number there, who he knew were under 16 years of age, and some respectable people had even signed the petition twice. The Maine Law was contrary to Scripture and infringed on the rights of man. The Sons of Temperance were a set of backbiters and slanderers; they were a secret society, and they went into their meetings and abused people behind their backs which they were afraid to do before them; he considered them far worse than the people they tried to malign. He might adduce arguments to show, that the Legislature would be stanning if they passed such a Law. They wanted to make a Law to prevent brewing of any kind. Why, the old Ladies would be liable to be fined, if they made their Gooseberry Wine. He contended that the Sons of Temperance were got up for a political and religious purpose; they wanted to exclude a certain class of people from the Government, as they had been trying to do in the United States. They were identified with the Know Nothings. What did the fanatics do in the State of Maine, they tarred and feathered a Catholic Priest who had come among them. Yes, and they would do the same thing here, if they had the power. The head of the order was a Know Nothing, and the Governor of New York was elected by the Know Nothings. Mr. Clark did not get in through the Temperance people. He was surprised to see men led astray by such humbugging. It was very well for Mr. Lord who had made a fortune in the business, to come forward now and advocate the Maine Law, you did not hear him say anything about Temperance, when he was in the trade. As long as the Law of the Land legalizes it, it is as respectable a trade as any. The Temperance cause was only a political trap of the old party to try and ruin the Liberal cause. The people in the United States are a set of fanatics in almost anything they take in hand. He did not want remuneration to give it up, he supposed he could make a living as well as any person else at another business, he had a farm, and his premises could be made available for manufacturing purposes. He was sorry to see so many persons in this Island connecting themselves with the Sons of Temperance.

Mr. LOU thought there was no occasion for all the ranting the Hon. Member had made, and he would have wished he had stuck to facts. If Hon. Members had followed his (Mr. Lord's) example, they would have had the Maine Liquor Law long ago. He kept a house of entertainment he believed from 1829 to 1833. Some time between those periods, a Temperance Society was formed in Tryon, and he was asked to join them; he would not join, but told them that when he had sold the small quantity of liquor he had on hand, he would not sell any more, and he did so and had never sold any liquor from that time to this. If Hon. Members engaged in the traffic had followed his example; when they left this world, they would find nothing to regret in what they had done in that respect. Mr. CLARK, the Hon. Col. Secretary has attempted to make it appear, that the temperance people are connected with the body called "Know Nothings," and that the head of the order is one of that body; nothing can be further from the truth than this; the head of the order is the present Colonial Secretary of New Brunswick, and they have no such organization of the kind in that province. He also said, that the Governor of New York was elected by the "Know Nothings," this also was not the case, for at the New York election there was a "Know Nothing" candidate, and Mr. Clark the present Temperance Governor, defeated him. The Temperance cause had no connection with party politics, for even in the House, Members of both sides voted for it. He knew that a few persons had made a party question of it, but that was no reason, why they should give up a good cause, because a few people tried to make political capital out of it. Mr. PALMER.—In consequence of the orderly manner—with one exception—which the debate had assumed, he would not take up the time of the Committee any further, and he would be quite satisfied without replying, if the Col. Secretary's speech was reported as he had given it. Mr. COLES and Laird made some observations, after which a division was taken on Mr. Whelan's resolution as follows:— For—Messrs. Whelan, Coles, Warburton, Mooney, Wightman, McIntosh, Dingwell, Muirhead, Cooper, Speaker. Against—Messrs. Palmer, Clark, Lord, Laird, McDonald, Montgomery, Haviland, Munroe, Longworth.

The speaker took the chair and the Chairman reported the Resolution agreed to. Mr. Palmer moved his resolution in amendment, which was lost on the following division: For—Messrs. Palmer, Longworth, Clark, Lord, McDonald, Montgomery, Haviland, Munroe. Against—Messrs. Whelan, Warburton, Mooney, Wightman, McIntosh, Dingwell, Muirhead, Cooper, Laird, Perry.

LATE FROM EUROPE.

THE NAVVIES AT THE TRENCHES—THE SANITARY COMMISSIONERS.

The public will learn with scarcely less surprise than satisfaction that the main object of the Crimean Railway Expedition is already completed, and that the munitions of war are now being conveyed direct from Balaklava to the trenches. It is needless to say, how vast a remission of toil to the overtaxed strength of the troops is thus effected, and with what increase of vigour and animation they now address themselves to the legitimate prosecution of the business of the siege, without the exhaustion consequent on labours wholly alien to those of an ordinary military nature. Moreover, the line is now laid and worked from Balaklava to the French camp, at the top of the steep incline hitherto by horses, but at the date of the last advices, the engine had begun to supersede animal power, which was gladly used for other purposes. Thanks to the agency of the railway, we have now begun to reciprocate the services the French had bestowed upon us in our extremity, for a large quantity of hot and hospital timber had been forwarded as long ago as the 10th, and such aid was highly appreciated by our allies, who are enthusiastic in their admiration of the systematized application and endurance of the navvies, and delighted by the methodical order and regularity that prevail through all the arrangements of the corps. This recognition on the part of the French is the more remarkable, as they themselves now are, and have all along been, well provided with horses and other means of transport. The branch to the opposite side of the harbour has for some time been completed, and available for removing the heavy guns and materials on the Diamond wharf, and by retaining both sides of the harbour available, is of the greatest utility. The main department of the Commissioners for Fuel and Stores has for some time back been removed from Balaklava to Kaitoi, where the navvies had likewise constructed a proper depot and platform, with the requisite sheds and conveniences. Of the assistance which the railway corps are to the Commissariat, and of the immensity of the operations of the latter department, some idea may be formed when it is stated, that of barley alone nearly 1,000 sacks are required by the army daily; and in the conveyance of this vast quantity, Mr. Bailey, the officer who looks after the matter, gladly acknowledges the assistance he receives from the navvies, and does everything in his power to facilitate its being rendered. So, indeed, do most of the heads and subordinates in all the other departments at Balaklava, the condition of which has undergone a most beneficial change, since the railway has begun to lighten it of some of the enormous traffic, or rather impediments to traffic and aggravation of confusion, which had so long rendered it the synonym of everything that was chaotic and distracting. The

removal of the issue depot of army requirement, as from Balaklava, would, of course, especially as camp, which would save coming all the distance and marching back with the miscellaneous utilities mentioned, that the Navvies, the well-sinkers corps had been set to be neighbourhood of the camp, that their researches would The line of the compass more were being in court Third Division in the front the hospital had filter altogether the whole sphere by the operations of the an aspect in every way prevailed a very short 17th, the date of the now quoting from, the extremely warm and had begun to complain of they had never experienced the thermometer had This autumn begets at the heat shall have run decomposition of all his miles of the British proportionate anxiety is arrival in the Crimea of of the sanitary commission are so indispensable to the skill of his medical con Gavin. As regards the done some good, and deal more, at Constant shore, at Scutari and K at Seraglio Point, have on. The authorities in every assistance, and already commenced.

SYMPATHY WITH THE Mayor of Bath, expressed to the House adopted by the meeting to express sympathy Shaftesbury says; "was an enormous crime the restoration of it and justice. But, w feelings of single ind the time has not yet interpose. We must with the expression d

DESPATCH FROM

The French Minister following despatch from the army of the East: Beyond M. Le Marchal— take you an account of w taken place in the trench work on the night of the forward the parallel, which is in front of the the Russians have on first line of ambuscade of the enemy much inc and whence they had very day. Captain Gu loss we sincerely regret

The troops to who executed it with much a heavy fire of musket The operation was rye 16th; it was, as the for the ambulances were much enlarged the employed in these to an opportunity for very courage.

General Niel and parallel opened during execution of an other which stands before to begin to-morrow at tunately, the rock to soil, a condition agal to struggle almost eve ment of the siege. On the left, we ha the central bastion, 14th to the 16th, and spine of a very heavy was connected again parallel of upwards d ing an angle advan tation.