

In a brief editorial, in a recent issue, the *Week* attempts to champion the cause of the licensed victuallers. We re-print in another column the greater part of this article. It is one of the most curious productions that we have seen for a long time, and certainly, can not have emanated from any of the intelligent and scholarly gentlemen who are known to be regularly connected with the journal named. If our readers will glance over the extract quoted under the heading "A Great Deputation," they cannot fail to be surprised at the ignorance therein displayed in reference to the provisions of the Scott Act, at the shallowness and inconsistency of the arguments (?) advanced, and at the slovenliness and inaccuracy of the language in which the whole is couched. The writer evidently has not taken any trouble to acquaint himself with what he calls the "real facts" of the case. He insinuates that the Scott Act does not require a majority vote for its adoption, and that it has not adequate provisions for the punishment of corrupt practices; and his statement about Northumberland shows that he is totally ignorant of the provisions for bringing the Act into operation. The Scott Act cannot be adopted without a majority vote in its favor. Its provisions against coercion, intimidation and bribery are definite, comprehensive, and equal in stringency to those of our Dominion election law. The Ottawa deputation did not want to "arrive at the real facts." The trouble was, they knew and felt that the Act in its operation interfered with their business, and therefore they asked the Government to interfere with the Act. If the sale of intoxicating liquor "has been increased" by the Scott Act, how can the Scott Act "totally destroy" the value of distillery property. The *Week* approves of an attempt to "arrive at the real facts," asserts that "there can be no real doubt" about these facts, and again states that "there is much reason to doubt" all within the compass of four lines. We are willing to defend the Scott Act at any time and in any place, but we respectfully request our opponents to inform themselves on the subject before they attempt to discuss it.

THE PETITIONS.

Every day, since the opening of Parliament, has witnessed the presentation of petitions against mutilation of the Scott Act and in favor of total prohibition. The circulation of these petitions was not commenced until shortly before the opening of the session. There was not time for the deliberation and effective organization that might otherwise have ensured their extensive signature, but the response of the public to the appeal to sign them has been totally unprecedented, and shows well how thoroughly the people of Canada are in sympathy with the great prohibition movement. A great many of the signed forms have been sent to Parliament direct, and already there have passed through the office of THE CANADA CITIZEN 860 forms addressed to the Senate with 67,390 names attached, and 864 forms addressed to the House of Commons with 67,557 names attached. The Province of Prince Edward Island had undertaken a petition movement of its own before the general work was commenced, and from that Province there goes a petition, differing slightly in its wording from that sent in from the other Provinces, but all parts of our Dominion are unanimous in their prayer for speedy and total prohibition. We look anxiously to our legislators for some early action in response to these largely signed and strongly worded petitions.

THE TEN GALLON CLAUSE.

Mr. Dalton McCarthy has before the House of Commons a bill to weaken the Scott Act by providing that wholesalers and manufacturers of liquors in Scott Act counties may sell in ten gallon quantities to be consumed in such counties. We have not received

a copy of the bill, but Mr. McCarthy's statement respecting it clearly indicates its character and object.

The Scott Act was passed for the purpose of giving the electors of any county or city power to prohibit the sale of liquor in their own locality. It does not interfere with the private conduct of any citizen; it simply refers to his course of action in his business or public capacity. Hence it does not interfere with his bringing into his home liquor purchased elsewhere. The Scott Act further provided that wholesalers in Scott Act counties might sell to outsiders; this was done in order that the Scott Act vote in any county should have absolutely no effect in territory wherein the electors had not adopted it. These places could get their supplies, as formerly, from Scott Act counties. The object of the Scott Act was to suppress intemperance, as far as this could be done on the lines already indicated, namely, stopping the public sale; by this means the consumption of liquor is diminished because of the greater difficulty of procuring it. The Scott Act cannot be total prohibition because of its local character, and it approximates to total prohibition in proportion to the extent of territory that comes under its operation,—it must be borne in mind that wholesalers in Scott Act counties cannot sell to consumers in adjoining Scott Act counties. The general adoption of the Scott Act would mean total prohibition. The law is harmonious in its plan, definite in its provisions, and effective in its operation, but, of course, limited in this operation by that plan and that consistency.

The framer of the amending bill has evidently failed to comprehend these simple facts. He does not grasp the spirit and intent of the law. He would make it inconsistent with its own nature and objects, because of its necessary limitation by that nature and these objects. Because it is not what it is not, he would prevent its being what it is. Even from a purely practical point of view, he is equally absurd. Because the Scott Act permits ten gallons to come into a county, he would allow ten gallons to be sold in a county. A pint may be brought into a county—should a pint, therefore, be sold in a county? A man may take a drink from his private bottle in a public bar,—should he, therefore, get a drink to buy in a public bar? The whole thing is too transparent and flimsy; the liquor men are determined to do what they can to destroy the Scott Act, and our legal friend has been drawn into an attempt to help them—we charitably hope from shortsightedly failing to study and understand the principles of the legislation he proposes to amend. No doubt, the House of Commons will summarily dispose of this specimen of Parliamentary verdancy; but there is in it for every temperance man another manifestation of the sleepless vigilance of the whiskey party, and a warning that we must be ever on the lookout for some new move on the part of our wily foe.

