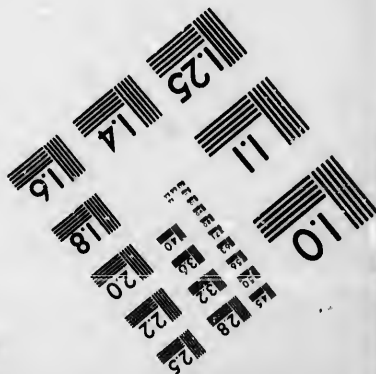
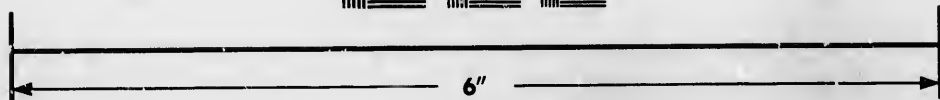
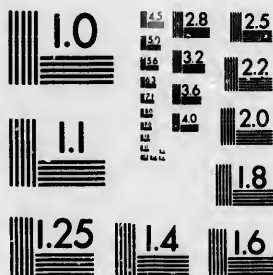


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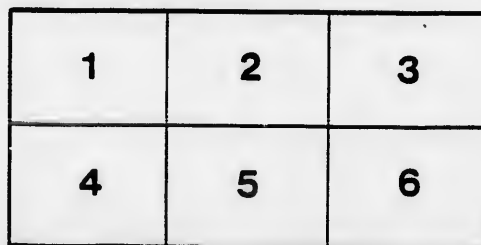
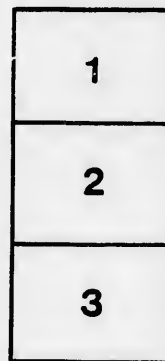
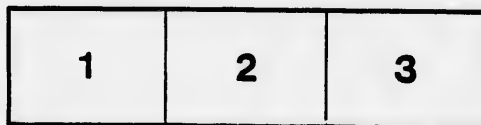
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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT,

IN THE SESSION OF 1834,

RELATIVE TO AN

INQUIRY INTO THE EXTENT, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF THE

PREVAILING VICE OF INTOXICATION,

WITH EXTRACTS

FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE SAID HOUSE

ON THE SUBJECT.

ALSO,

AN INCIDENT ON THE MAINE LAW.



Toronto :

PRINTED BY THOMAS H. BENTLEY,
AT THE OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN,
No. 9, WELLINGTON BUILDINGS, KING STREET.

1853.

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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

In the parliamentary session above mentioned, James Silk Buckingham, Esq., then one of the Members for Sheffield, moved in the House for the adoption of the following resolution:—

“That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the extent, causes and consequences of the prevailing vice of intoxication among the labouring classes of the United Kingdom, in order to ascertain whether any legislative measures can be devised to prevent the further spread of so great a national evil.”

The motion was opposed by Lord Althorpe, on the part of the Government, and by several others ; but on a division, after Mr. Buckingham's reply to the various objections that were urged, it was carried against the Government; the unexpected majority being received with loud cheers; and the following committee, in which almost every part of Great Britain and Ireland was represented, was appointed. [Here the names are given of the 38 members composing the com-

mittee, among whom are Mr. Buckingham, as Chairman ; Lord Althorpe, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Sir Robert Peel ; Mr. Baring ; Mr. Hawes ; Alderman Wood ; Serj't Lefoy ; Sir Andrew Agnew, and other distinguished gentlemen.]

The list of witnesses will be found to embrace men of various ranks, professions and localities, so that their experience was gathered over an extensive range of countries and occupations ; and on the evidence elicited from them after many days of patient examination, extending from the 9th of June to the 28th July, 1834, both inclusive, an elaborate Report, from which the following extracts are made, was agreed to by the Committee, which Report in full, was subsequently adopted by the House, and was ordered to be printed among its records.

Extracts from the Report, &c.

CONSEQUENCES TO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER.

“ That the consequences of the vice of intoxication among the humbler classes, and the prevalence of intemperate habits, and pernicious customs among the middle and higher ranks, are so many and so fearful to contemplate, that it is as

difficult as it is painful to enumerate even the outlines of them.”

“That the following are only a few of the evils directly springing from this baneful source :

“1. Destruction of health ; disease in every form and shape ; premature decrepitude in the old ; stunted growth and general debility and decay in the young ; loss of life by paroxysms, apoplexies, drownings, burnings, and accidents of various kinds ; delirium tremens, (one of the most awful afflictions of humanity) ; paralysis, idiotcy, madness and violent deaths,—as proved by numerous medical witnesses, who have made this the subject of their long and careful investigation.

“2. Destruction of mental capacity and vigor, and extinction of aptitude for learning, as well as of disposition for practicing any useful art or industrious occupation.

“3. Irritation of all the worst passions of the heart,—hatred, anger, revenge, with a brutalization of disposition that breaks asunder and destroys the most endearing bonds of nature and society.

4. “Extinction of all moral and religious principle, disregard of truth, indifference to education, violation of chastity, insensibility to shame, and indescribable degradation ; as proved by Clergymen, Magistrates, Overseers, Teachers, and others examined by your Committee on all these points.”

CONSEQUENCES TO NATIONAL WELFARE.

“ Among others, the following evils may be distinctly traced:—

“ 1. The destruction of an immense amount of wholesome and nutritious grain given by a bountiful Providence for the food of man, which is now by distillation converted into a *poison*; the highest medical authorities examined, in great numbers before your Committee, being uniform in their testimony that ardent spirits are absolutely poisonous to the human constitution; that in no case whatever are they necessary or even useful to persons in health; that they are always, in every case, and to the smallest extent deleterious, pernicious or destructive, according to the proportions in which they may be taken into the system, so that not only is an immense amount of human food destroyed, whilst thousands are inadequately fed; but this food is destroyed in such a manner as to injure greatly the agricultural producers themselves; for whose grain, but for this perverted and mistaken use of it, there would be twice the present demand for the use of the now scantily fed people, who would then have healthy appetites to consume, and improved means to purchase nutriment for themselves and children, in grain, as well as in all the other varied productions of the earth.

“ 2. The increase of pauperism in its most fear-

ful shape, divested of that sense of shame which would disdain to receive relief, whilst honest industry could secure the humblest independence, and associated with a disregard of consequences and a recklessness of all obligations, domestic or social.

“3. The spread of crime in every shape and form, from theft, fraud, and prostitution in the young, to burnings, robberies, and more hardened offences in the old; by which the gaols and prisons, the hulks, and convict transports are filled with inmates; and an enormous mass of human beings, who, under sober habits and moral training, would be sources of wealth and strength to the country are transformed, chiefly through the remote or immediate influence of intoxicating drinks, into excrescences of corruption and weakness; the population thus made criminal being like the grain, subjected to distillation, converted from a wholesome source of strength and prosperity into a poisoned issue of weakness and decay.

“4. The retardation of all improvement, inventive or industrial, civil or political, moral or religious; the hindering of education; the weakening of good example, and the creation of constant and increasing difficulties in the propagation of sound morality and sublime truths of the Gospel, both at home and abroad, according to the testimony of teachers, pastors, and others, examined by your Committee.”

REMEDIES TO BE APPLIED.

“That the remedies to be applied to the cure of evils so deeply rooted, so long established, so widely spread, and so strongly supported by selfish indulgence, ignorance, prejudice, custom and pecuniary interests, are two-fold ; first, legislation ; and, secondly, moral.

“That the *right* to exercise legislative interference for the correction of any evil which affects the public weal, cannot be questioned, without dissolving society into its primitive elements, and going back from the combined and co-operative state of civilization, with all its wholesome and lawfully imposed restraints, to the isolated and lawless condition of savage and solitary nature.

“That the *power* to apply correction by legislative means cannot be doubted, without supposing the sober, the intelligent, the just and the moral portion of the community unable to control the excesses of the ignorant and disorderly, which would be to declare our incapacity to maintain the first principles of government, by ensuring the public safety.”

“That the *sound policy* of applying legislative power to direct, restrain or punish, as the cases may require, the vicious and contaminating propensities of the evil disposed, cannot be disputed,

without invalidating the right of government to protect the innocent from the violence of the guilty; which would in effect declare all government to be useless, and all lawful authority to be without any intelligible object or end."

Among various other immediate remedies proposed in the Report, the following are recommended:—

1. "The encouragement of Temperance Societies in every town and village of the kingdom; the only bond of association being, a voluntary engagement to abstain from the use of ardent spirits, as a customary drink, and to discourage by precept and example, all habits of intemperance in others."

2. "The diffusion of sound information as to the extensive evils produced to individuals and to the state by the use of any beverage that destroys the health, cripples the industry, and poisons the morals of its victims."

3. "The institution of every subordinate auxiliary means of promoting the reformation of all such usages, courtesies, habits and customs of the people, as lead to intemperate habits."

4. "A national system of education, which should ensure the means of instruction to all ranks and classes of the people, and which, in addition to the various branches of requisite and appropriate knowledge, should embrace, as an essential

part of the instruction given by it to every child in the kingdom, accurate information as to the poisonous and invariably deleterious nature of ardent spirits as an article of diet, in any form or shape; and the inculcation of a sense of shame at the crime of voluntarily destroying or thoughtlessly obscuring that faculty of reasoning and that consciousness of responsibility which chiefly distinguish man from the brute, and which his Almighty Maker, when he created him in his own image, implanted in the human race, to cultivate, to improve, and to refine; and not to corrupt, to brutalize, and to destroy."

The following are the ultimate remedies recommended in the Report:—

1. "The absolute prohibition of the importation from any foreign country, or from our own colonies, of distilled spirits in any shape.

2. "The equally absolute prohibition of all distillation of ardent spirits from *grain*, the most important part of the food of man in our own country.

3. "The restriction of distillation from other materials, to the purposes of the arts, manufactures and medicine, and the confining the wholesale and retail dealing in such articles to chemists, druggists, and dispensaries alone."

The Report contains the following concluding suggestions:—

"Your Committee deeply impressed with the

long catalogue of evils which they have endeavoured thus briefly and faintly to describe, and feeling the strongest and most earnest desire to lessen their number and amount, humbly venture to suggest to the House the importance of drawing the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the immediate introduction of such improvements as your Committee have recommended in the navy and army, and in the ships employed in the merchant service; to the causing such other ameliorations to be made in this respect as can be effected by their authority, wherever that may extend; and to the public declaration of their determination to *introduce early in the ensuing Session some general and comprehensive law for the progressive diminution and ultimate suppression of all the existing facilities and means of intemperance as the root and parent of almost every other vice.*

“They venture still further to recommend the most extensive circulation during the recess under the direct sanction of the Legislature, of an abstract of the evidence obtained by this inquiry in a cheap and portable volume, as was done with the Poor Law Report, to which it would form the best auxiliary; the national cost of intoxication, and its consequences, being ten-fold greater in amount than that of the poor rates and pauperism itself, being indeed chiefly caused by habits of intemperance.”

*To the Honorable the Legislative Council
and Assembly of Canada, in Parliament
assembled.*

It will be seen that several of the foregoing clauses of the said approved and adopted Report afford the most express and the highest authority in proof that the Legislature, both Imperial and Colonial, possess the *right* and the *power*, according to the principles of the English Constitution, to pass such enactments for the ultimate and entire prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, as ordinary beverages, as may under existing circumstances seem requisite or expedient. As it is most deplorably manifest, that all the great evils attending the sale and the use of those liquors as a beverage, are still most extensively and deeply afflicting the various communities of this Province, the special and serious attention of the members of the Provincial Parliament, and of all reflecting and well-disposed persons among us, is most earnestly and respectfully requested to the subject at large, and their influence and co-operation are especially desired in support of the applications which are being made to the said Parliament, in the present Session, for the passing of some enactments for the immediate or early prohibition of the traffic in those liquors as articles of ordinary beverage.

I certify that the above extracts are correct,
and Editors generally would confer a favour on the
cause of humanity by giving them an insertion.

ROWLAND BURR.

Maine Liquor Law Agent.

Toronto, January, 1853.



AN INCIDENT.

In these days of the "Maine Law," there are many and lamenting voices croaking out their Jeremiads over the *invasion of human rights*, which they charge upon that most just and beneficent legislation.

"May not men choose their beverage? May they not decide for themselves, the questions, 'What shall we eat, and what shall we drink? What tyranny to interdict the free exercise of these natural rights!'"

Perhaps it has not occurred to these advocates of the largest liberty that many of those for whom they offer such disinterested pleading pray no prayer with so much fervor and sincerity as this: "Save us from such friends!"

Some months since, when the adoption of the "Maine law" was about to be submitted to the suffrage of the people in a neighboring state, I had occasion to be driven a short distance, in a hired carriage, from a railroad depot in that state to a village a few miles off the track. Upon taking my seat in the carriage, I found that I had for a driver a man whom I had known, when I was a boy, as one of the young men prominent in the circles of young people as the "prince of good fellows." His appearance was very much

changed from what I remembered it in those times to which my thoughts instantly carried me back. The change was not one for the better. There were manifold and manifest indications in his face, and person, and speech, that excesses at the bowl had wrought sad havoc upon him."

Said he, "I s'pose you don't remember me, though I know you."

"O, yes, I do," I replied, "though you have *altered* a good deal since I have seen you."

He seemed to feel what was implied in the change of which I spoke, and was silent for a moment; then, without any very remote transition, began again,

"I am working hard for the election."

"Well, how is it going?"

"O," said he, "I am a Whig; I always was a Whig; and I always mean to be; I go that ticket."

"What," I inquired, "Liquor bill and all?"

"Yes, *sir*! if I never was a Whig before, I would be now, to put that bill through."

Had I mistaken the character and cause of the change I had noticed in him? I looked at him again to correct or confirm my judgment. He seemed to understand the significance of the glance, and went on:

"Yes, I go for that bill. They laugh at me at the tavern there for that. They all know I

love a glass of rum, and take it too. But I tell them, *I am the very man to vote for that law. If ever a poor fellow knew what such a law would be worth to him, I am that man. I do love rum, and I do drink it, and I will have it as long as I can get it; I can't help drinking it when I see it, and I can't keep away from where it is.*"

The tears startled out of his eyes.

"Well," he resumed, "it will be a happy day for my wife, if ever that bill becomes a law."

"I remember her, I think."

"Well, she's been a good wife to me, and *she'll be glad when there's no more rum to be had.*"

That's one of the men whose *rights* are outraged by the "Maine law," whose *sufferings* under the tyranny of such despotic legislation are so pathetically written about, and harangued about in rum editorials and political gatherings, whose *liberty* is so cruelly taken away by the state, and whose prerogative of self-government in the matter of strong drink is so urgently argued.

Poor, patient, sorrowful wife, the hour of her gladness has not yet chimed. The help of the law has been denied her imperilled husband. Shall we here turn back the wave of light and blessing which has rolled its bright-crested surge through the homes of our ancient commonwealth?

