

# LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

## SECOND PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 11.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

### REPORT PRESENTED.

Mr. Deroche presented the fourth report of the Committee on Standing Orders.

### BILLS INTRODUCED:

The following Bills were introduced:—

Mr. Meredith—To incorporate the Canada Silver Mining Company.

Also—To authorize the sale or exchange of a block of land in the village of Dresden, known as the Cemetery ground.

Also—To incorporate the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, London.

Also—To incorporate the London Life Insurance Company.

Mr. Clarke (Norfolk)—To amend and consolidate the several Acts relating to the Port Dover and Port Huron Railway, and to give effect to several by-laws.

Mr. Striker—To amend the Act to incorporate the Prince Edward Railway Company.

Mr. Monk—To enable the Corporation of the city of Ottawa to issue debentures for a further sum to complete the construction of water-works for the city of Ottawa.

Mr. McLeod—Respecting the consolidated debt of the town of Bowmanville.

Mr. Christie—To legalize a certain agreement between the town of Dundas, the Desjardines Canal Company, the G. W. Railway, and the Milton Road Company.

Mr. Scott—To incorporate the town of Meaford.

Mr. Snetsinger—To incorporate the Trinity Church of Cornwall.

### PROHIBITION.

Mr. CLARKE (Norfolk) moved for an address to His Excellency the Governor-General praying that His Excellency will cause to be laid in due course and form before the Parliament of Canada the desire of this House that the British North America Act of 1867 may be so amended as to enable the Legislatures of the several Provinces, or the Legislature of the Province of Ontario, to enact such laws as in their wisdom may seem necessary for the regulation and partial or entire prohibition and suppression of the use and of the making and vending of ardent or intoxicating liquors as a beverage, on the ground that the same is detrimental to society as well as being the most prolific source of idleness, poverty, and crime. In doing so he apologized for having kept the notice so long upon the paper, but explained that he had done so in order that all the questions to which answers had been received might be laid before the Committee. After referring to the unfortunate state of the law which prevented the Bill before the House last year from passing, and showing that the 9th section of the British North America Act gave him the right to make this motion, he said it was not his intention to make what was commonly known as a temperance speech, nor did he intend reviewing at any length the present licensing system, especially as that system was to be dealt with during the session by the hon. the Provincial Secretary. He looked upon the licensing system in the Province and throughout the whole world as an excellent means of raising the revenue, but altogether inadequate in having any effect for the moral benefit of the community. He pointed to the records of the press, of the police courts, and of judges, and to the testimony of private individuals, in proof of the assertion that the present laws afforded no help to those whose wish and hope it is to reform the people from the evil of intemperance; and upon the inability of the law to afford this protection he founded his present motion. He referred to the efforts put forth by Mr. Dougall, of Montreal, and his (Mr. Clarke's) own father, in order to stem the evil of intemperance by teetotalism, which, however, were only partially successful; and after that it became apparent that prohibition was the only method which could be successfully called into requisition. Accordingly, in 1854, the Legislature passed the second reading of a Bill to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors by a vote of 95 to 5, although it was thrown

out on the third reading on account of a technical objection. No Legislature since that time had been inspired by the same high sense of their duty to Christianity and the country. He pointed out the large number of influentially signed petitions which induced the Legislature of 1859 to come to that conclusion, and also resulted in the passage of the Dunkin Act. He was proud to say that the feeling in favour of prohibition was increasing, and he was sorry that such a law had been declared unconstitutional last year. He thought it would have been more in consonance with the dignity of the House to have allowed this measure to pass, and then have reserved it for the consideration of the Governor-General, as had been done with the Orange Bills. He then quoted the report of the Select Committee appointed at Ottawa last year, and also the remarks of Mr. Justice Wilson at the opening of the Winter Assizes at Toronto, upon the facts of intemperance. He also referred to the report on the License Law introduced into the Legislature of Quebec, which he said would show how much that Province was behind Ontario in the matter of the Liquor Law as in many other matters of public policy. He read the remarks of Chief Justice Sir William Bovill, of England the answers returned to the questions of the Select Committee of this House to magistrates, judges, governors of gaols, and showed from statistics that a large portion of the death-rate was due to this cause. He referred to the article in the *Mail* attacking the Prohibitory Law in Maine, and showed that Mr. Griffin, the gentleman who had made out the report upon which the article was founded, had been so much opposed to the law that he gave up his situation. He read from the speeches of prominent members of the Maine Legislature to prove that the report was altogether incorrect, and showed that many other States of the Union had abandoned the Prohibitory principle. The two greatest civilized nations in the world—England and the United States—all their greatest men and highest statesmen, tell us that nothing would ever put an end to the evils of intemperance but entire prohibition of its manufacture and sale. He was told that public sentiment was not prepared for this sweeping change, but he declared that public sentiment would never be prepared for any great social reform unless it were fully agitated, in proof of which he advanced the case of Sir William Wilberforce and the liberation of the slaves within the British Dominions. He only wished that he had himself more eloquence and more influence which he could bring to bear upon this question. He had done his best—done it, too, as a duty which he owed to his Maker and his country. (Cheers.) He had been charged with not being an abstainer himself; this he denied, asserting that he was so in fact, although not pledged. He held, however, that this was immaterial to the question. It could not depend upon the individual who advocated this reform whether it should commend itself to the House and the people or not. It ought to be sufficient that the correctness of the principle was established upon such incontrovertible evidence before high Heaven and this honourable House, for the sake of those to whom the liquor traffic brought injury, family infelicity, and death—for the sake of our churches, our schools, our sons and our daughters—for the sake of the present and for the sake of the future, he begged of hon. members not to resist this motion. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. CORBY asked if the hon. gentleman had closed that establishment in Thunder Bay where it had been said he sold bad whiskey.

Mr. CLARKE considered the question an impertinent one. He had heard a report to that effect before, and he could give it the lie (cries of "Order") most emphatically; if any liquor was sold by his son it was good liquor. He had never had any communication with that establishment, and he was glad to say the liquor business had been discontinued in that store.

The motion passed.

### ADDITION TO PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Mr. CAMERON moved that Mr. Merrick should be added to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. He said he found that there were no less than seven members on that Committee—three members of the Opposition, and one Independent member, the hon. member for Niagara. He believed it was in the interest of the people that the public accounts should be carefully examined and those who were interested in seeing everything was done properly should make the examination. It was therefore necessary