

54

boats, as experience showed that granting such licenses endangered life to a very large extent. Mr. Davis then took up each clause of the bill, arguing that they all were in the direction of curtailing the evil effects of the liquor traffic. He denied that the Government aimed at centralisation, the bill before the House giving the people full power to deal with the liquor traffic. Every Temperance paper condemned the proposition of the leader of the Opposition to hand back to the Councils the licensing power. Even The Empire newspaper did not commit itself to the proposal. Charges were made against License Commissioners, but so far as he (Mr. Davis) was acquainted with these men they were a most excellent body of officials. (Cheers.) In his own riding two-thirds of the tavern-keepers are Tories, and they are not afraid to take part in elections. There is no coercion, and that would be found true in all the ridings of the Province. Referring to the charge made by Mr. Clancy that the municipalities were not getting a fair share of the license fund, Mr. Davis said that they received far more than they did previous to the enactment of the present license law. The Opposition were very free in their charges, but they had not been able to make any specific charges of mismanagement against the License Department of the Government. In conclusion, as a Temperance man, he had much pleasure in giving his approval to the bill introduced by the Provincial Secretary.

Dr. Willoughby followed, in his own inimitable style. Unlike the member for South Grey, the Doctor, when he works himself into an excitement, forgets to take his hands out of his pockets. There they are lodged, and the Doctor proceeds. He was generous enough not to inflict upon the House the charges which he made last session against the License Commissioners of East Northumberland. The Doctor, however, did take one hand out of his pocket to emphasise his reply to Dr. McLaughlin, that there was not a Reform tavernkeeper refused a license in West Durham under the McCarthy License Act. He refused, however, to tell the number of Conservative and Liberal licensees respectively. The member for East Northumberland went on to make charges of discrimination against the Commissioners of his riding. He said that the tavernkeepers of his riding were badly used by the Commissioners. Then he concluded and carefully laid by his notes for reference in the campaign in East Northumberland.

Mr. Gibson (Huron) spoke from the standpoint of a man who was a total abstainer for fifty years. He was quite certain that a great setback would be given to Temperance by giving County Councils the power to appoint License Commissioners. He was satisfied the present Temperance sentiment was to be attributed to the Crooks Act. If there is a violation of the law now it is done on the sly, showing that it is discreditable. It should be considered that County Councils have not the executive authority to carry out these Acts possessed by the Provincial Legislature. That itself would be an objection to the proposal made by Mr. Meredith. The whole Conservative party is responsible for the passage of the McCarthy License Law, and it would not do for hon. gentlemen opposite to disclaim any connection with the reasons actuating the effort put forth to deprive the Provinces of the right to control the liquor traffic with respect to License Commissioners. It was not claimed that they were all perfect, but knowing as he (Mr. Gibson) did the License Commissioners of five counties, he was bound to say that no charge could be brought against them of wrong-doing. The law was impartially administered.

Mr. Hudson is always inclined to take a fair view of questions before the House. Of course he had to take up the refrain of his friends, but he was more honest and franker in his statements. There were irregularities in his riding arising from the administration of the license law, but as soon as public attention was called to them they were corrected. He argued, however, in favor of the proposal made by his leader, Mr. Meredith, believing that the licensing power in the hands of the Government was conducive to political partisanship.

Mr. Wood (Brant) declared that the Government had done ten times more for the enforcement of the Scott Act than the County Councils. That was suggestive, as showing what might be expected from the proposals to give County Councils the power to appoint License Commissioners. If the Opposition were in earnest in their protestations regarding Temperance, they should be found co-operating with the Government in carrying out the excellent license law of the Province. Their duty should be to improve the bill before the House, and not to throw obstacles in the way of carrying out the law. They made sweeping charges against License Commissioners, but they had not been able to convince the people that there was anything wrong in the administration of the law. He was free to admit that the license power would be dangerous in the hands of a Conservative Government. (Hear, hear.) That was their history. They passed gerrymander bills when they had the power, and in all other respects they showed that they were masters of the art of utilising their authority in the interests of their party. He denied that the license law was a source of strength to the Government. Its administration involved many difficulties which were more embarrassing than they were conducive to strength. There was no ground for the argument that the law should be changed. The electorate was satisfied with the law and its administration.

Mr. Wood is one of the rising members of the House. He is moderate in his opinions, speaks fluently, and commands the respect of both sides of the House.

For several days the Opposition had been predicting a tremendous onslaught on the license law by Mr. Marter. The member for Muskoka is now considered the private detective of his party, and it was confidently expected by his friends that he would throw some light on deeds which they allege to be dark. Even the leader of the Opposition prepared himself for listening, but Mr. Marter did not proceed very far until it became quite apparent that all he had to allege was that the administration of the license law was bad for the Conservative party. He read extracts from correspondence of anonymous writers in local papers, reflecting on the administration of the

law, and, if anything, his reading was more dreary than his unsubstantial comments.

Mr. Marter said he was very confident that next year he and his colleagues would be on the other side of the House and that the Government knew it, a statement which amused the House very much, and wound up by saying very bombastically that the Government could not fool the people all the time.

Dr. McKay does not often address the House, though he is a remarkably easy and effective debater. Sundry charges of corruption made against the Commission for the South Riding of Oxford were what called him to his feet, and when he had finished with the member for Muskoka there was hardly a shred remaining of that part of his speech relating to the Oxford Riding. The most effective reply to the charges of Mr. Marter was contained in a letter written by Mr. Justus Miller, one of the License Commissioners, to The Ingersoll Sun, and published on the 19th ult. He read it to the House as follows:—

"DEAR SIR:—Kindly grant me space in your valuable paper to make a few statements regarding an article that appeared in your columns a short time ago in reference to certain actions taken by the Board of License Commissioners granting a license in Mount Elgin contrary to law. The gentlemen composing that article are and have been laboring under erroneous ideas regarding the facts of the case. Any person reading the article can easily see the drift or intention of the writers. In justice to myself I shall now point out a few erroneous statements:—

(1) Moved by Justice Miller, seconded by Jas. Ryan, that no license be granted to the Huntley House, Mount Elgin, on account of its being legally petitioned against. I did not move such a motion, neither is there such on our book.

(2) "Moved by Justus Miller, seconded by Jas. Ryan, that a license be granted to C. C. L. Wilson for the Huntley House, Mt. Elgin, upon the consideration that he put the house in repair and provide a suitable tenant." I did not move this resolution, nor is there such on our books.

(3) C. C. L. Wilson never verbally or by writing applied or asked for a license. Therefore the force of their contention fails when they try to make it appear illegal on my part when the firm of which I am a member supplied material and superintended certain work for Mr. Wilson.

(4) John Gould did apply for license as provided by law.

(5) I did not erase any names from the petitions, nor were there any erased in my presence by any person.

(6) Our Inspector did not hand into Court a letter from the Attorney-General, nor was such a letter produced by any person.

Now, Mr. Editor, I do not wish to occupy space in pointing out many other erroneous statements, having said enough to convince your readers that there are usually two sides to a question. Having nothing to conceal in this matter, our books are open to inspection to convince the skeptical that my statements are positive facts.

With all due deference to these gentlemen, we claim the right and privilege to exercise our judgment as to the rendering of the law laid down for our guidance as Commissioners. Respectfully yours, JUSTUS MILLER.

Dr. McKay continued by claiming the Opposition was lax in its duty in not having investigations instituted if there was such corruption prevailing as they charged on the floor of the House, and by showing the absurdity of trying to advance Temperance by giving back to County Councils the appointment of Commissioners.

Mr. Creighton then took the floor. He desired the country to understand that he had a most important statement to make, and that was in denial that the present license law was passed at the request of the Temperance party of the Province. The member for North

Grey then tragically unrolled a mammoth bundle of the petitions presented to the House previous to the passage of the Crooks License Law, his object being to show, as he said, that the Government Council to take the license power from the municipalities. He maintained that the prayer of petitions was not granted in full, and that the Government could not produce a single petition to show that they were warranted in assuming control of the liquor traffic. Mr. Creighton then went on to argue that the Liberal party were not the friends of Temperance; in fact he seemed to believe that his own party initiated all the amendments to the present law. He contended that a License Commissionership was at present but a stepping-stone to a Registrarship, and that the withdrawal of the power of appointment from the Government would have the effect of abolishing politics among Temperance people. He wound up by declaring it most unreasonable that the present Provincial Secretary should expect to have any of the numerous charges hurled from the Opposition benches substantiated or particularised. The Opposition, he said, had no hope of curing things until the Government was altogether abolished.

Hon. G. W. Ross rose shortly after eleven o'clock to reply to the member for North Grey. He called the attention of the House to the unsatisfactory condition of the license law before the Crooks Act came into operation. The municipalities were tempted to increase the number of licenses to increase the license fees. He appealed to the member for North Grey to say that Temperance had not been promoted by the Crooks Act. No Temperance party or church court would support any movement for its repeal. Moreover, the Crooks Act run the gauntlet of these general elections. (Cheers.) Where were the Opposition then, just where they will be at the next general election. (Cheers.) He read a resolution passed by the Methodist Conference held in Hamilton in 1882, condemning any movement tending towards giving back to the municipalities the license power. No petition was presented to the House asking for a modification of the principle of the present Act. No County Council asked for the power offered them by the leader of the Opposition. Since the Act came into force about 40,000 licenses were granted, and yet the Opposition were not able to bring any serious complaints against the administration of the Act. They retailed the gossip of barrooms, but they did not show that during a period of 14 years no serious charge against License In-