

out of its report. In the same way Mr. Marter cited cases, not in the district where he himself lived, but in Sault Ste. Marie, in Haldimand, in Kent, all places sufficiently far away. As for the Toronto Island license, there was no taint of illegality connected with it, and the facts were that before the license was granted there was more rowdyism, more drinking there, more illegal selling than now. (Applause.) Not only had the Government officials tried to stop it, but the Toronto police had tried to stop it, and a special constable had been maintained there, and yet a great improvement had taken place on the granting of a limited wine and beer license.

Mr. Harcourt then cited the great decrease in convictions during the past few years, showing that since 1889 the number has fallen from 4,797 to 2,237, while in 1887, when 50 per cent. of the Province was under the Scott act, there were 1,943 more convictions than in 1895. Ontario stands highest in point of sobriety in the Dominion, while in Maine, where there is prohibition, there are 2.53 convictions per 1,000 of the population, against 1.92 per 1,000 in Ontario. (Applause.) As for the charge of partizanship, it was well known to the House that in County Councils there is far more partizanship than in the House, and it had been found well to divorce municipal politics from license administration. What would be the result of giving the Mayor of a city a voice in the license system?

The charge that there are no Conservatives acting as License Commissioners was next rebutted by Mr. Harcourt, who pointed out that for many years there has been an ardent Conservative on the board at Kingston; that there is one in Toronto, in Waterloo and elsewhere.

Mr. Whitney—How do you know?

Mr. Harcourt—A leopard may change his spots, but a Conservative generally remains a Conservative. (Applause.)

Next Mr. Harcourt touched on the charge that the law about conviction for the third offence is neglected. The member for Lennox knew better; knew that there was a hotel in his own riding where the law had been enforced.

Mr. Whitney—Name.

Mr. Harcourt—It is the Briscoe House. (Applause.)

Mr. Stratton—The Cavanagh Hotel, Peterboro', was another case.

#### SOME SPECIMEN CASES.

Licensees have often been fined twice and afterwards obtained a transfer of license and gone out of the business, Mr. Harcourt continued. It is within the discretion of the Magistrate to lay an offence as a first instead of a third offence, so that neither the inspector nor the license commissioners have any control of it. The department often receives information from temperance people and others regarding violations of the law and write to thank them for it. There had been a sensation in some circles about an alleged scandal in Millbrook. The facts of the case were as follows:—In 1881 the population of the town was over 1,000, which entitled it to four licenses. Ten years later the population, for reasons which the Ontario Government were not responsible for, had fallen to less than 1,000. Consequently the number of licenses had to be reduced to three and were kept well within the law. Under a section of the act the municipality may direct that a special census be taken. This was done in Millbrook, and the result that the population returned showed over 1,000. In view of that it was again entitled to four licenses. There was an observance of the law so far as the license commissioners were concerned. The municipal officers of Millbrook settled that question, and it was their action that led to the increase of licenses. (Applause.) The Sault Ste. Marie case had also been made a sensation of by certain newspapers which connected a murder with an alleged illegal license. It was stated that the two men who committed the murder became drunk at a tavern which was illegally licensed. As a matter of fact the place was as legally licensed as the Queen's or the Rossin in this city. The investigation by the Crown Attorney showed, too, that the liquor had been got at another hotel across the river, and not one drop was obtained in the place in question. (Applause.) Fault had also been found with the granting of a license to one Hunt in Hamilton, some parties having said it was granted illegally. In this case the commissioners acted within the provisions of the statute, and Hunt

had the endorsement of both the members for the House of Commons and the Legislature in the constituency from which he came.

#### THE QUESTION OF POLITICS.

Proceeding, Mr. Harcourt asked the hon. gentlemen opposite to give one instance in which the license commissioners had been used politically. The leader of the Opposition had not told all the facts in regard to the Halton libel suit. The charge was that the commissioners there had told a man named Caverhill that if a certain man was granted a license his family would thereafter support the Government.

Mr. Kerns—Does the hon. gentleman know who Caverhill is?

Mr. Harcourt—I do not care who he is.

Mr. Kerns—He is one of the Police Magistrates appointed by this Government.

Mr. Harcourt—How does that affect the question?

Mr. Kerns did not reply, and Mr. Harcourt continued, saying that by the verdict of his countrymen the commissioner had been freed from the charge and it had fallen to the ground. The present Government had no object in encouraging a lax administration of the liquor law. As a matter of fact the hotels of this Province were better equipped and had as good a class of licensees as exists anywhere. As for sobriety, this Province was away ahead of any other Province in the Dominion, or any States that were near us. In concluding, Hon. Mr. Harcourt said he would be glad to receive any complaint about license officials and would undertake to investigate it, and if it brought discredit on the Government the official would promptly lose his position. (Applause.)

#### THE PATRON LEADER.

Mr. Haycock also spoke briefly on the amendment. He said that the question should not be a political one. The temperance question is the one we ought to hold away from politics; yet Mr. Marter had introduced it as a vote of want of confidence in the Government. (Hear, hear.) He could not agree with the preamble of the amendment, but he did agree with the proposed system of appointing license commissioners. That system would allow a representation of the people through the Warden, the county through the County Judge, and the Province through the Government appointee. There was never an honest liquor law on the statute books of Canada, Mr. Haycock contended. The trouble arose through the offence being compounded by settling the violations of the law by paying money. Mr. Haycock concluded by saying he would have to support the motion of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meacham, in a speech of some length, said that the Government could not surely claim credit for the increase in temperance sentiment throughout the Province. He then quoted a number of figures to show the income the Government received from licenses.

Mr. Middleton said Mr. Marter's speech had been clearly partizan. All temperance people have confidence in the leader of the Government regarding temperance legislation. Mr. Middleton quoted Mr. Marter's reply to the questions put by the W. C. T. U., in which he had not answered yes to the question as to whether he would strive for the enforcement of the liquor law. Mr. Middleton concluded by saying that The Templar was a paper which, politically, was untrustworthy; if some of the statements it made were made by any other newspaper in the Province it would be liable for libel.

Mr. Kerns considered that if the people of Toronto had their present Mayor on the License Board the temperance people would have nothing to fear. Mr. Kerns then recited the incidents in the Halton County case, and closed by saying he had no hesitation in saying the license law was not properly administered in that county.

It was now past 11 o'clock, and Mr. Marter suggested the adjournment of the House, but the members of the Government asked that the debate be continued for an hour at least.

Mr. St. John, continuing the debate, made a vigorous speech, in which he said the administration of the License Department was made a means toward the Government keeping in office.

Mr. Kidd spoke briefly with regard to the personnel of the commissioners in Carleton, and Mr. Moore spoke for