

tion for every 862 of the population, whereas in 1894 there was one for every 359; 50 per cent. better in this Province and 100 per cent. worse in Quebec, according to these statistics. We heard a great deal of the advanced temperance sentiment in Nova Scotia, but in that Province in 1884 there was one conviction for every 751 of the population and in 1894 one for every 361, so that under this much-vaunted and much-boasted sentiment of Nova Scotia the convictions doubled in ten years and lessened by 50 per cent. in our Province. In New Brunswick there was an improvement, though not so great as in our Province. In British Columbia there was not an improvement but the reverse. In Prince Edward Island there was some improvement, but the result of the comparison for all the Provinces and including the Territories showed that Ontario presents noticeably a better showing than any other Province in the Dominion. As to the State of Maine, of which we always heard a great deal when the liquor question or the license question was under discussion. Taking the statistics for five years for Maine, from 1888 to 1892, and the statistics of this Province for the same five years some instructive results were shown. Taking the four largest cities in Maine and the four largest cities in Ontario, the number of arrests for drunkenness in each per thousand was:—In Portland, the largest city in Maine, 39 out of every thousand; in Toronto, the largest city of Ontario, for that period there were eighteen arrests per thousand, less than half the number in Portland; in Lewiston there were eleven arrests per thousand against six in Hamilton, and taking the four largest cities in Maine—Portland, Lewiston, Bangor and Biddeford—and the four largest in Ontario—Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa and London—the average number of arrests was 30 per 1,000 in the Maine cities and thirteen in our four largest cities. We have not the official figures from 1892 to the present for the State of Maine, but we had for Ontario, and it was gratifying to know that each year here there had been a marked improvement in this same arrangement, and unofficially we learned that there had been no improvement in this matter of arrests for drunkenness in Maine. The result was, so far as statistics can show, that this Province under license presented a better showing than Maine under a prohibition law. In this Province during these five years the number of persons committed for drunkenness per 1,000 was 1.92 and in Maine 2.53, nearly twice as many in Maine under prohibition as in this Province under license. There was an equally interesting result if one considered the reduction of licenses under the statutes to which he had referred. Taking four years which could not be affected by the Scott act, which was in force in one-half of the municipalities of the Province for some years, the number of licenses granted in 1874, 1881, 1891 and 1896 was 6,185, 4,029, 3,523 and 3,132 respectively; so that since 1874 we have cut off through the statutes more than half of the licenses. There were only 3,000 in 1896, as against 6,000 in 1874; it is now one for every 700 people, and in 1874 it was one for every 262. A great stride had been made in the temperance sentiment of the people, and that marked improvement—he did not say completely, but in some degree—must be attributed to the legislation passed by this House. The commitments for drunkenness are equally noticeable. In 1875 there were 3,868 commitments; in 1881, 3,497; in 1891, 2,736, and in 1896, 1,907; so that since 1875, a period of twenty years, the number of commitments for drunkenness in this Province had been cut in two. Last year only one out of every 1,148 was committed; twenty years ago one out of 444. It was more noticeable still, although he was not pretending exactly to account for it, if they took the Scott act period. In 1886-7-8 the Scott act was in force in 25 out of 41 counties—more than half of those in the Province. The commitments for drunkenness during that time were: in 1886, 3,555; in 1887, 4,180, and in 1888, 4,451; so that the number increased during each of the Scott act years. In 1894-5-6 under the license law the number of commitments dropped from 4,400 to 2,274 in 1894, 2,237 in 1895 and 1,907 last year. In the three last years under license the total number of commitments was 6,818, in the three Scott act years 12,186. He thought that he might fairly argue that there had been a moral revolution in the drinking habits of the people,

partly due to the wise provision of this Legislature and partly to the fact that the laws were well carried out. Some might say that these comparisons were not fair, as the conditions which govern arrests had been relaxed but he was not alluding to arrests but to commitments. He would say to those who criticized the present bill as not going far enough on temperance lines that in the past temperance legislation had been advanced by moderate provisions, step by step. There were 816 municipalities. In 185, or one-fifth, there were no licenses, in 22 there were only two licenses each. The figures were both instructive and interesting.

#### THE NEW BILL.

As for the new bill, Mr. Harcourt said, in the first clause it was provided that hereafter there shall be only three licenses for every 1,000 of population and that beyond the first 1,000 there shall be one license for every 600, a very decided advance. It would be said that the bill only cut off 120, 130 or 140 licenses. But surely this was going in the right direction and it was an advance. Those who said this forgot several things. The municipal Councils could still reduce the number of licenses. The license commissioners themselves, in the execution of their duties, had been able to refuse and could still refuse licenses, and this had been done and there was the local option provision. Thus there was a fourfold way to reduce the number of licenses.

On page two of the act were set out the conditions under which a by-law reducing the number of licenses could hereafter be passed by municipal Councils in cities and towns. It is provided that notice of application to pass such a by-law, signed by 100 electors in cities, or 50 in towns, shall be filed with the Clerk of the municipality on or before Nov. 15, and application to be made on or before Feb. 15, and the Council may thereafter pass such a by-law on or before March 1. This power of reducing the number of licenses has been freely exercised by municipalities in the past. For example, in 1887 the Council of Toronto in one by-law cut off 74 tavern licenses and 16 shop licenses. The City Council of Hamilton in 1894 cut off 19 tavern licenses and 1 shop licenses. In London in 1892 there were cut off seven tavern and four shop licenses. In Ottawa a few months ago fifteen tavern licenses were cut off. In the four instances he had given under the powers already possessed by municipal Councils not less than 105 tavern and 30 shops were deprived of licenses. The fact that only a few municipalities had availed themselves of this power showed that public sentiment was not sufficiently advanced to warrant the House in making a more extreme provision than was embodied in the bill now before it.

In view of the present discussion he had collected some useful information which he would put in the possession of the House. He had obtained returns from 45 out of the 97 license districts of the Province, and from 438 municipalities, or more than one-half the total number. Out of the total number 105 municipalities, or only one-quarter, had exercised their power of reducing the number of licenses by by-law. In seven out of the 105 no limitation was provided as to the number of taverns, and in 68 no limitation as to the number of shops. It was interesting also to note that in 35 cases the municipalities so reducing the number of licenses had reconsidered their decision. In twenty of such cases the Council had increased the number of licenses, and in fifteen they had made a further reduction, showing that perhaps it is wise to go slowly, inasmuch as it could not be clear to hon. members that public sentiment, as indicated by the direct representatives of the people in their municipal Councils, was markedly in favor of a general reduction in the number of licenses. How have the Boards of License Commissioners acted in this regard? In 65 out of these 105 municipalities the Commissioners issued fewer licenses than the by-laws called for. The much-abused Boards of Commissioners had actually responded more readily to the wishes of those who were concerned in promoting the temperance sentiment of the county than the municipal representatives of the people had done. No local option by-law had been passed in the Province since Jan. 1, 1894. Was the Legislature to be blamed for not going farther in the matter of the population limit when it was found that the la