

With the consent of the House the dis-  
the measure will take  
tee of the whole House.

### THE LICENSE BILL.

The House then went into committee upon the bill to amend the license laws. The Provincial Treasurer pointed out that the bill exempted county towns of less than 2,500 population from the operation of section one, which limits the number of licenses, and a clause was added providing that in such cases there should be one for each full 250 for the first 1,000 of the population and one for each full 400 over 1,000 of the population.

The clause of section three, which gives to the municipal Councils power to further limit the number of licenses and prescribes an earlier hour for closing than that fixed by the present act, was productive of considerable discussion.

Mr. German contended that the proposal to place back in the hands of the municipalities the power respecting the hours of closing was a returning to one of the worst features of the old license law. Just as soon as this bill becomes law, if it should be passed, there will be an agitation begun in every municipality in the Province between the prohibitionists and those who are not prohibitionists seeking either the curtailment or lengthening of the hours of sale. The responsibility for the hours of closing all over the Province should rest in the hands of the Government, and of the Government solely. He moved to amend the clause by striking out that portion which gave the municipal Councils power to regulate the hours of closing.

Mr. Meacham would agree with the proposition of the hon. gentleman on condition that the Government would take the responsibility for shortening the hours.

### A RETROGRADE STEP.

Mr. Haycock characterized placing in the hands of the municipalities the power of regulating or interfering in any way with the regulating of hours or granting of licenses as a retrograde step. He quoted a resolution of the Methodist Conference, passed in 1882, which emphatically deprecated any legislation which would place the control of the licenses in the hands of the municipalities, where the ward politicians and heelers would be able to make their influence felt. He hoped the Provincial Treasurer would allow the clause to be struck out, and urged the advisability of having uniformity in the hours throughout the Province.

The following resolution, passed at a meeting of the Council of Owen Sound and signed by T. J. Thompson, Mayor, and Thos. Gordon, Town Clerk, was read by Mr. Cleland:—"That in view of proposed changes in the liquor license law this Council is of opinion that the license law as it now stands is a good one, and that any attempt to impose further restrictions would be most unjust and harassing to our fellow-citizens who are engaged in the hotel business, and to the public in general, as the late trains do not arrive here until 10.30 o'clock in the evening, and the public would suffer great inconvenience if the hour for closing be changed to 10 o'clock; and that a copy of this resolution be signed by the Mayor and Clerk and forwarded to our representative in the Local Legislature for presentation to that body." Mr. Cleland added that from his experience of municipal Councils he did not think it would be in the interests of the people generally to put the power of fixing the hours of closing in the hands of the Councils.

### HE WANTED TO KNOW.

Mr. Marter thought the Government should let the House know what they thought upon this point. It appeared to him that if the clause giving municipalities power to regulate the hours of closing were eliminated, that portion giving them power to fix the number of licenses should also go out. Personally he thought the Government should take the responsibility of regulating the hours, upon the principle that there should not be divided responsibility. He admitted, however, that it is a difficult question.

Mr. McLean would be very sorry to see the clause eliminated unless there is something better put in its place. He suggested that the matter might be submitted to a vote of the electors in a similar manner to the money laws.

Mr. Crawford saw difficulties in the way of carrying out the provisions of

the sub-section. It appeared to him that if it passed there was a possibility of having the municipal elections on temperance lines, which would be in the interests of the municipalities and likely to work mischief.

Mr. Middleton hoped the provision would remain in the bill.

Mr. Gibson of Huron, who announced himself as a total abstainer for years, regarded the clause as a retrograde step. The Councils throughout the country did not want to have the handling of the question. Local opposition presented many difficulties arising from local boundaries, and it was possible that a hotelkeeper on one side of a road could be open while his neighbor across the road would have to close. He did not hesitate to say that many so-called temperance people are very intemperate, and of the people who voted in favor of the plebiscite probably one-half of them would take a glass if they had an opportunity. He did not believe in legislation by coercion either for temperance or anything else.

### A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

The Attorney-General pointed out that this is a question upon which there are many different opinions. He suggested that instead of the amendment offered by his friend (Mr. German) being submitted to the House, it would be better to let the sense of the House upon the clause of the bill as it stood. If the clause did not stand then the existing law would remain undisturbed and the purpose sought would be attained. He was aware that many Councils objected to having this duty thrust upon them, and claimed that the Government was shirking its duty in throwing it upon their shoulders. He did not agree with that proposition entirely, but there was something to be said upon both sides. It had been thought that perhaps it would be best to leave to the municipalities the fixing of the hours. His gentlemen opposite were opposed to throwing the power back into the hands of the municipalities. There is force in both objections. Even the temperance people are divided upon the point.

Mr. Miscampbell declared that the clause, if passed, would throw the liquor question into all municipal elections, and would revive the bitter contests we have witnessed in the past. While he was himself a temperance man, he thought that the regulation of the traffic should be such as to induce the best possible class of men to engage in it, and not to so restrict the number of licenses as to cause an increase in the number of whiskey dives.

Mr. Howland in the course of a speech of some length argued that the judgment of the Privy Council had been wrongly interpreted and that power was really given to the Province to prohibit. He quoted a head-note in Mr. Wheeler's book in support of this contention, and charged that there had been some concealment by which the temperance people had been led to believe that no such power had been given.

Mr. Hardy replied that Mr. Howland was entirely mistaken, and the power was not given. The Judicial Committee had been asked plainly if the Province had the power to prohibit, and the answer had not been yes. Finally the section was allowed to stand for further consideration.

The next clause which caused any discussion was that permitting the sale of shops of packages of one-half pint. Mr. McLean held that if the clause was passed the law would be in such a shape that retailers could sell any quantity, which would be unfair to the wholesale dealers. He asked for a maximum to be fixed. The clause was held over until the evening session.

After recess, at the request of Hon. Mr. Harcourt, the House passed the clause relating to shop licenses, which provides for the sale of liquor in unbroken packages of not less than one-half pint.

Dr. Willoughby took exception to the withdrawal from the druggists of the privilege of selling liquor for medicinal purposes, upon the order of a duly qualified medical practitioner, in larger quantities than six ounces. If the medical man could be trusted to give a certificate of necessity for medicinal purposes, he should certainly be allowed to specify the quantity.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt admitted that probably nineteen out of twenty of the druggists conduct their business honorably, but there are exceptions, which the clause is intended to cover. This