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[By James S. Segee.]

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PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, February 17.

LIQUOR BILL.

After the usual preliminaries, the reading of the bill, &c. Mr. Scoullar rose and said, the bill now before them was asked for by the largest number of petitioners that ever came before the House. Nearly ten thousand persons signed the mammoth petition, many men of the first walks of life, some the millionaires of the country, and some who held seats in the House. Of course the House would pay attention to the opinion of such men. He would not attempt to make a speech, but would draw attention to the statistics of the traffic and the operations of the present law. Some of Her Majesty's subjects by the present law are forbidden the use of alcoholic drinks, and he thought that if they had the right to legislate so for a part, they had the same right to legislate for the whole. [The hon. member then drew attention to the provisions of the law.] He knew that some hon. members would contend that they had no right to pass this bill; but the existing laws clearly proved that this traffic differed from all others, and he thought that if the restrictions were lawful as they now existed, they had the right to extend them. The hon. member for St. John had called for some returns connected with this trade, and these were now before the House, and showed that there were imported 446,824 gallons. Brandy cost £167,559; Gin, £136,792; Whiskey, £36,125; Rum, £161,000—add to this what was supposed to be smuggled. Total, £441,200. This was the supposed cost of importation. To the consumers it would be about £823,460, that is, taking the price paid by those who buy by the pint or larger quantity; but many paid higher than this, and it was within bounds to say, that within ten years they paid for these alcoholic drinks one million of money, enough to build their railroads without having recourse to Earl Grey. This would be for every inhabitant \$20, and for every adult man £40. This was for ardent spirits alone, and when to this was added the cost of wine, ale, and beer, it would swell it to an amount still more enormous. This was the outlay for an article from which much evil arose, and that could be productive of no good; and he hardly thought that any hon. member would rise to advocate the use of this before such an audience as that assembled there to-day. [The hon. member then read at great length extracts from reports, &c., &c.] The revenue now derived from this traffic is £20,000. £20,000 for what? He called it blood money, himself. Human nature is human nature, and hon. members would perhaps not wish to part with this; but he thought that the extinction of this trade would in a few years prove a means of increasing the revenue, when the people turned to useful purposes the money now wasted in drinking. The amount imported into this Province, he said, was greater, according to population, than that imported into Canada. How much of this twenty thousand pounds would be saved in the expenditure on the gaols, poor houses, and lunatic asylums. In his County, Sunbury, they only wanted this bill for the Oromocto. In other parts of the County were to be found a people inferior, in a temperance point of view, to none in the Province; but in Oromocto there still remained a few, who, though they did not haunt taverns as before, contrived to indulge in the use of those destructive liquors. [The hon. member read extracts to prove that the law is unconstitutional.] It was said that the law could not be put in force. The Provincial Secretary said that the law was a very good one, if it could be carried out. But he asserted that the law could be carried out. They would have the best unpaid police in the world, 25,000 good temperance men at least, who would combine to carry this out; and tell him they would not be able to do it! It was nonsense. They had carried it out in the State of Maine, where the people were not thought to be such lovers of the law as the people of this Province. He would ask hon. members if they would not do something for the good of their fellow-men, and sacrifice some of their own pleasure for so good a purpose. They knew that there were men who could not use this without being led on from step to step to the drunkard's grave. It was not the use of it perhaps that was evil, but the abuse. But let them all reflect, and they

would find that not one but could call to mind some friend, or brother, or relative, or school-fellow, who had been a victim to this failing. It was their duty to shew a good example, an example of sobriety and total abstinence. The law had passed in Maine, and would pass this year, or at all events next year, in Massachusetts. New Brunswick is now spoken of as the grogshop of the State of Maine; and would they stand this? They could not probably carry out the law to the letter, but they would this year check the habit to a great extent. Nova Scotia too would have the law; it must become the law of North America. The people were determined and would have the bill. If the constituency were drunken themselves, even they would not select drunkards to represent them. He was sorry the introduction of the bill had not fell into abler hands; he could not make the appeal to the feelings others could; but what he wanted was to stop the drink coming in, to stop the use of it; the details of the bill may want alteration, but the principles were what was wanted. There was a petition from the Brewers against the bill. He would not say whether they should be indemnified for the loss they would sustain, that was for the House; but he would say they would be entitled to very little. Their land would not be lessened in value, and their buildings would be useful for many purposes. Money made in this trade never remained with the parties, and they could not point to an old rum-seller in the Province whose family are wealthy. One of the petitioners lived for a long time in France, and the money made here is sent out of the country to support him there. He thought he could be therefore entitled to little remuneration. He would say no more, as there were many prepared to speak to it who were much better qualified to do justice to the subject.

Mr. Needham said that this was one of the most important days for New Brunswick that it had yet seen; as on their action that day depended in a great measure the future weal or woe of the Province; and he therefore felt that they should approach such a subject with feelings akin to solemnity. The importance of this bill was felt in the country to an extent that could never have been anticipated. Two months since no one could have supposed that the minds of the people were so thoroughly aroused to the sense of the benefit of such a measure, or that the bill could be passed through the New Brunswick Legislature; and it was only when the voice went forth from the Legislature that those, who, from interested motives were opposed to the bill, began to tremble for their Diana, and to fear the overthrow of their false gods. He was willing to give all those who opposed this bill credit for sincerity, and trusted that a fair and impartial hearing would be given to the reasons and arguments on both sides. He would give a short synopsis of the bill in order that it might be better understood, and having proved that the law was just and necessary, he would then appeal to the feelings on this subject that must actuate every hon. member. He believed there were some hon. members, who, though consistent Sons of Temperance, would oppose this bill from conscientious motives, and he was inclined to give them all credit for good motives, but he would endeavour to show them that their reasons were groundless. The preamble was a host in itself. If the preamble were admitted the sections must follow as a matter of course, and if that preamble were before the House as a resolution, it would be supported by every hon. member on the floor of the House. [The hon. member then reviewed the several sections, explaining their effects.] Such was the nature of the law they were called on to discuss, and the supporters to sustain. He would endeavour to be brief, and would not travel over the ground taken by the hon. mover, and quote other men's sayings. The preamble stated the reason for the passing such a law: "Whereas experience has proved that the use of Alcoholic liquors as a beverage has been the cause of a very large proportion of the ills that afflict society." There could be but one opinion in reference to this. No one could doubt how great would be the difference between the state of society, such as it has been, and such as it would be had the inventive faculties of man never discovered the mode of manufacturing Alcohol. He admitted that unless good and sufficient reasons in its favour could be advanced, the bill ought not to pass. Former laws confined in themselves the germ of this law, and men even in former days

were so convinced of the ills of this traffic as thus to endeavour to set limits to it. It was said that this bill was legal suasion; this he denied, it was moral suasion, because the moral force of the advocates of the temperance society had been aroused to the advocacy of such a measure, because there are so many, who, insensible to moral suasion contrive to traffic in an article so deadly and ruinous. If the bill totally prohibited the importation of alcoholic liquors, then it might perhaps be unconstitutional; but then this law did not forbid any man who is determined to drink from importing for his own use, only it would not allow him to deal it out for the distribution of others. It was objected that the loss to the Revenue would be great. He thought that the loss would be felt and rejoiced in. But he thought it would increase the Revenue. If you could teach the people to abstain from the inebriating cup, would they not be led to use more of the other articles of use, and the duties would thus be increased on what is of more use. They would also be in the position to enjoy more of the luxuries of life, and thus also the revenue would increase. But suppose the £20,000 a year were gone forever, was that to be compared to the £100,000 a year that left the country annually and never returned; and would it not be better that the people had this, than that the revenue have its £20,000 so properly designated by the hon. mover, the price of blood, drained out of the pockets of the paupers and criminals of the Province? Let them look at the reasonableness of the bill. It was said that the bill was unconstitutional; he would be willing to leave this to the Attorney General, and would wish him to say whether they had the right to prohibit the sale of alcoholic liquors. If this were unconstitutional, then all the acts relating thereto should be expunged from the Statute Book. If they could not legislate on this point, by what right did they legislate against the thief or him who imbrued his hand in another's blood. If you attempt to legislate on moral principles, then they had the right to deal with this. If there were any provision that there should be no importation, it might be argued that it is unconstitutional. But it deprives a man of none of those rights secured to him by Magna Charta; why then call it unconstitutional. He thought they should all be brief, and he believed that no one would say anything to hurt the feelings of any one. All that was wanted was that they should award to each other the right to differ, and to advance those arguments that seemed to them to prove their opinions correct. He would ask by what right they passed Quarantine Laws. Why should a ship be stopped. They had the inherent right to enter the port, but they were stopped by the Law Executors, and why be stopped? It was to protect the people from the ravages of disease. They had the right to do this, but they had in like manner the right to pass this Quarantine Law. He hoped to see the day when this would go further; when the people convinced of the iniquity of the traffic, will come to the Legislature and prevent its importation altogether. It may be said that this was but a half measure. He agreed in this, and only regretted that they had not now the power to grant them the full measure of the law they required. He believed he had shown that the House had the right to pass such a law, it but remained to shew that the use of intoxicating liquors is demoralising, as stated in the preamble. It would be insulting to the good sense of the House to go into many arguments, to prove that drunkenness is the cause of much of the crime and immorality that prevails. Neil Dow, the Mayor of Portland, states that there is a vast diminution in the amount of crime in that city, and further says that the comparison is not a fair one, as the police are now so much more vigilant.—Look at the Laws on the Statute Book! They are in themselves an anomaly. They licence a man to sell an article, and then punish the man who buys. The inebriate is dragged before a man, who, though perhaps indeed invested with power, was his boon companion the night before, and then by him is fined. Would it not be more consistent to wipe away all these laws from their Statute Book? Were further proofs wanted, look to the records of their Courts of Law, and there they were to be found. The last man who was executed in St. John, and would to God he was the last, might trace his crime to Rum. He landed a stranger on the wharves, was enticed into a licensed house, there drank to drunkenness, returned on board his ship, and there unconscious

of what he was doing in the frenzy thus excited without any apparent cause, stabbed his fellow sailor. It was death to both of them. Trace this back, and who were accountable for this crime.—They should be cautious then, for this was a question of grave responsibility. Who were their constituents when considering this question? It was a matter of general importance, and their constituency was the entire Province, and by the opinion of the majority they should be judged. If he were to consult the particular views of his own constituency, there were so many on both sides, (the majority he believed were in favour of the bill,) the only course he could adopt would be to retire into the committee room; but he felt that he owed it a duty to his country to advocate what were the principles of truth. Another reason why he thought that this was not only a good but a constitutional measure: it is only some twenty years ago that the Temperance principle was first promulgated, and see what had been the wonderful efforts of this, which had been at first but as a small herd. They began with only nine, but at the late census of the Order they appeared to number 300,000. In this Province in less time they have attained to the number of twenty thousand; who, as was said, would be a great unpaid police. But there was another police not spoken of, the ladies, who feeling that they had much at stake, that their happiness and that of their families depended on this law, and they would be a police that would enforce this law. No sooner had this stir arisen in the west, than it shed its benignant light on their parent Isle, in England it worked wonders, while in Ireland, the Emerald Isle, there arose a great and mighty Apostle of this glorious cause whose labours regenerated his native land, driving out the snake of intemperance as the Patron Saint had driven out the Toads and Serpents of another kind. So great and glorious was his mission that even in America they were not willing that the good cause should be carried on without his assistance. They invited him, and in his zeal he came and administered to hundreds of thousands of his fellow countrymen; and thus, his was a name that would go down to all generations as a great and glorious one, to live in the breasts of his countrymen, and the good and great of all lands, and to be a beacon and shining light to the whole land. Would that he (Mr. N.) had the tongue of an Angel to impress on all who heard him, these great principles of truth and morality. The hon. member then appealed to hon. members to lend their aid to carry out the bill when passed, and called on those who had been able to live and drink all their lives without having fallen to a state of drunkenness, to throw away their moderation and forego their own pleasures for the good of the community. He referred to the petition of the Brewers, and expressed his willingness to compensate them for the losses they would sustain, as the parent country had when it struck the bonds off the slaves, given compensation to the planters. He referred to the Penitentiary to show the effects of drunkenness—out of 90 inmates 84 trace their crimes to drunkenness; to the Lunatic Asylum, where the per centage is not quite so large; to the Poor Houses and the Gaols.

He and all others who voted for this law, would do so with the belief that it would become law, that when it went to the upper region, it would pass there, and that when it came to the Executive Council they would not use their power of the veto, to veto the will of the people. The hon. member concluded a speech of two hours length, with a long peroration in which the usual teetotal arguments were used effectively.

From the Fredericton Loyalist.

RAILWAY DEBATE.—(Continued.)

[As it is impossible for us to publish all the speeches on the great Railway question, we will publish those which are of the most interest to the inhabitants of this County. So with all other questions of importance that may come before the House.]

Friday, February 27.

Mr. English said the hon. members who had preceded him argued too much like lawyers, those on the Government side bringing forward everything they could in favour of the line, and in favour of railways in general, and those opposed to it bringing forward everything they