THE MAINE LAW.

House of Assembly, Wednesday, April 19.

The following is the Resolution submitted last evening by the Hon. the Attorney General:

Resolved, That it is expedient to prohibit by Law—to take effect from the First day of January, One thousand eight hundred and fifty-six—the manufacture, importation and sale of Spirituous and all other Intoxicating Liquors, except for medicinal, chemical and mechanical purposes, and the sacred Ordinance of Religion; and also to prohibit the keeping of such Liquors for sale, except for the purposes aforesaid.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the whole, to resume the consideration of the various Petitions presented to the House during the present Session, praying the Legislature to abandon the duty on Intoxicating Liquors, and to prohibit their Importation, Manufacture and Sale, except for medicinal purposes—the hon. T. H. Haviland in the Chair.

A very lengthy and animated discussion ensued, of which the following is a brief and imperfect sketch :

Mr. Fraser said, that the subject now under the consideration of the House, was generally considered one of great importance ; but judging from the silence manifested by honorable members on the present occasion, doubts might be entertained of the correctness of this impression. It was, however, a question that ought to be carefully viewed in all its bearings, for it involved a large amount of Revenue, which they were not, he thought, called upon to sacrifice at present. A general election had just transpired, and but little had been said with reference to this question ; indeed, he thought, the people in general cared very little about it, either one way or the other. As for himself, he was not prepared to vote for a measure of this nature without further instructions from his Constituents—a measure which he looked upon as an infringement of the rights of man, as calculated to inflict a great and serious loss upon the Revenue, and which under present circumstances, could not be carried into effect.

Mr. Yeo thought the total prohibition of the Liquor Traffic would occasion no serious loss to the Revenue. He spoke from experience when he declared his belief, that the Traffic was a great and serious evil ; and gave it as his opinion, that its prohibition would prove a great and lasting benefit to the country. With reference to the men employed in shipyards, the injurious tendency of the Traffic was everywhere perceptible ; and he was decidedly of opinion, that were shipbuilders, as a preliminary condition to the stoppage of the traffic, required to pay £100 into the Treasury, for the benefit of the Government of this Island, for each vessel built by them, they would be great gainers by the arrangement. At present, wherever a ship is being built, grog-shops are invariably established, which strip these poor simple people to whom he alluded of everything. He know individuals in his own neighbourhood, who, to procure Whiskey, had sold all their hay and straw, and the consequence was, that they had lost all their cattle, from starvation ; and the same state of things would, doubtless, be found to exist in other localities. Persons who had embarked their capital in this business, would soon find it to their advantage to embark it in some other pursuit. If intoxicating liquors were always used in moderation, the measure prayed for by the Petitioners would be unnecessary; but every body knew that this was not the case. In every part of the world, the results of the traffic were the same ; and although many, doubtless, conscientiously opposed a measure of this nature, he for one, sincerely wished that intoxicating liquors could not be obtained in the country. The hon. gentleman here instanced Princetown, as illustrating the benefits of temperance. Once that place was one of the worst in the country for drunkenness, but having embraced temperance principles, the inhabitants of that place were now, at least, 100 per cent. better off than they were nine or ten years ago. As to the falling off in the Revenue alluded to by the hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Fraser), he had not the slightest apprehension on that score; and believing that the contemplated prohibition would prove a great benefit to the country, he would give it his most hearty and cheerful support.

Hon. Mr. MacEachen did not suppose there was the slightest difference of opinion amongst honorable gentlemen, as to the real merits of the question ; and if he could be persuaded that the country was prepared for a measure of this nature, he would not himself oppose it. He thought, however, that the mass of the people were not sufficiently prepared for a sweeping measure of this description. In that part of the country which he had the honor to represent, the question was quite new. He would not object to the measure, simply on account of any real or presumed falling off in the Revenue ; but until the minds of the people were prepared for it, he could not think of giving it his support.

Hon. Mr. Lord thought the question had undergone sufficient discussion—it had been before the public quite long enough—and the sooner the Legislature passed a measure of the nature prayed for by the Petitioners, the better, perhaps, would it be for the country. The House had occupied the whole of last evening, and the former part of this day in discussing this matter, and no determination had yet been come to on the subject. He was sorry to see so many able advocates manifesting so much coolness on the present occasion. It had been his wish for several months to give his support to a prohibitory Liquor Bill that would give satisfaction to all parties. He would give parties engaged in the business sufficient time to wind up their affairs—say about two years—before putting a stop to it. The passage of the Resolution before the Committee would shew the country that they were prepared to give effect to a measure of this kind. He had not seen the New Brunswick or Nova Scotia Bills ; but this Island would, he thought, do well to follow in the wake of those Provinces in a matter of this kind, although we might not be disposed to copy them in everything. In a matter of this nature there might, indeed, be a necessity to do so. The Leader of the late Government, it was well known, was a manufacturer of spirituous liquors, and it had been broadly stated out of doors, that to that circumstance was to be attributed the political changes which had recently occurred. When he heard the present Leader of the Government (Mr. Palmer), come out so strongly, the other evening at the Temperance Hall, in favour of allowing compensation to manufacturers, he (Mr. Lord) was not prepared to oppose his doing so. Indeed, he thought, it would be dishonorable and unjust, not to afford them compensation, to some extent, for when many of them commenced business, it was deemed an honest and lawful trade—was in short, considered both lawful and respectable. It was not, he thought, right or proper to stop all the stills in the country, and deprive respectable persons of a large portion of their capital, without making them some compensation. As to ardent spirits being an evil they need not, he thought, argue long on that point, and he regretted to perceive, that their consumption was rapidly on the increase. He could refer to several places where, formerly there were but two or three, but where there are now four or five grog-shops in active operation. Last year an amendment was made to the License Law, which, however, had not worked advantageously—many persons were still, notoriously selling without License ; and not an individual amongst the Sons of Temperance was to be found willing to interfere to prevent this illicit traffic. If the Legislature were to pass the Maine Law, who were to see it enforced ? Was this to be left to the Magistrates—to the Sons of Temperance—or the people themselves ? He (Mr. Lord) felt persuaded that if left to the parties to whom he referred, those engaged in the traffic would continue selling, and the revenue now derivable from that source would be lost. These were his views of the subject ; and whether he forfeited his popularity or not by their enunciation, did not concern him. It was necessary, however, to make a beginning, and he should therefore support a prohibitory enactment, provided that it was based upon just and equitable principles.

Hon. Mr. MacAulay was gratified to find a measure of this importance making such sure and rapid progress. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where, a few years ago, the matter was scouted by the inhabitants, the subject is now very generally entertained and supported. Many individuals still view a measure of this kind as an aggression upon the rights of man, as if a man possessed any right whatsoever to destroy his fellow man. He was amazed to hear the hon. member (Mr. Lord) propose to offer a premium to persons who are disseminating death and destruction throughout the country, and he (Mr. M'Aulay) thought, he would be acting in a much more straight-forward manner by voting against the measure altogether. For himself, he (Mr. MacAulay) would give the measure his hearty support. He held in his hand a book printed as far back as the year 1656—more than two hundred years ago—and he would read a short extract therefrom, for the information of the Committee :—

> "The tap-room fits them for a Jail;
> The jail to th' jibbet sends them without fail;
> For those that through a lattice rang of late
> You oft find crying through an iron grate."

This extract correctly described and set forth the true state of the case. He confessed, however, that he did not, at present, see his way clear to prohibit the traffic altogether. When he considered the peculiar circumstances of our seagirt shores, he felt somewhat perplexed as to how the measure was to be carried out, and acknowledged that large quantities of "rotten rum" might be introduced in fishing boats and by other means. Still he felt himself bound to give his support to any practicable measure for the abolishment of this pernicious traffic.

Hon. Mr. Lord, in proposing compensation to those parties who had embarked their capital in the business, said he was only carrying out an idea broached by the Leader of the present Government, a few evenings since in the Temperance Hall. He (Mr. Lord) would not, however, pledge himself to do anything of the sort ; but he was averse to their passing an unjust Act. The hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. MacAulay) had been for the last two hours ransacking an old musty History ; but he had not succeeded in finding much after all. As to the evils of intemperance, it was quite unnecessary to go beyond the spot on which he then stood, to be reminded most forcibly thereof. But what we want is action—not words.

Mr. Davies, on rising, said he held in his hand, a Resolution which he thought, would enable the House, without the slightest embarrassment to the country, to carry out the prayer of the Petitioners. Almost every hon. member who had spoken to this question, had expressed his willingness to carry out the views of the Petitioners ; but no hon. gentleman had yet satisfactorily shewn how this could be accomplished without inflicting serious injury upon the Revenue. No gentleman would, he thought, grudge giving out of his income, for so desirable an object as this, some £5 or £6 annually ; and with the view of testing the sincerity of the Government, he proposed the following Resolution, in lieu of that under the consideration of the Committee, viz. :

Resolved, as the opinion of this Committee, that it is advisable to abolish the introduction of Spirituous Liquors into this Colony, as well as the manufacturing of the same, and that, in order to replace the loss the revenue will sustain thereby, it is advisable to raise a sum equivalent to that loss, by raising a revenue equivalent to that raised on Spirits, Wine, &c., by laying a certain percentage on the Income of Gentlemen possessing over One hundred Pounds per annum."

The hon. the Attorney General remarked, that the Resolution just moved by the honorable member for Belfast (Mr. Davies) was quite characteristic of that honorable gentleman. When he first spoke of supplying the deficiency in the Revenue, which, it was argued, would be occasioned by the proposed Law, he imagined the hon. gentleman was going to revive his old and favorite Quit Rent scheme. But for his part, he (the Attorney General) was not at all alarmed as to the Revenue. He was quite prepared to modify the existing taxes, and even slightly to increase the rates now levied on certain articles of consumption, should such a step be found necessary. And even were the country in debt to the extent of a whole years Revenue, this circumstance, of itself, would not deter him in the course he was then pursuing with reference to this matter. But this, fortunately, was not the case. The country is now prosperous and the public debt trifling, and there could not be a more fitting or favorable opportunity for the adoption of a measure of this importance than the present. What signfied a debt of £6 or £7,000 or even one amounting to a whole years revenue, to a young and flourishing Colony like this ? Surely the credit of the colony would not, in the slightest degree, be endangered by the contraction of a debt to either amount, should the same ultimately prove to be unavoidable. The proposition of the hononorable member for Belfast (Mr. Davies), was very ingeniously calculated and doubtless intended to afford that hon. gentleman a plausible excuse for voting against the measure then under the consideration of the House. He upbraided him (the Attorney General) with not having shown how the contemplated deficiency in the Revenue could be supplied; and he had just volunteered a plan for supplying that deficiency, by taxing all gentlemen whose incomes were over £100 a year, from 100 to 300 per cent ! In that case, these gentlemen would, doubtless, be pretty well salted. The proposition of the honorable member to whom he referred was of too trivial a nature to be entertained by the House for a single moment. Again approaching the real question before the committee, the hon. and learned gentleman said he saw no difficulty whatever in the way of a prohibitory enactment of this kind. At the same time he admitted that it would not be possible to frame a measure so perfect in all its parts, as to prevent all evasion of the Law. Our Laws are being evaded almost every day, and none more frequently than those for raising a revenue; but this was no valid reason why such laws should not exist. At present a strong inducement is held out to the smuggler. He knew by experience, that in addition to the saving to be effected by a successful evasion of the Revenue Laws, a ready market is sure to be found for the contraband article—all the more so if it is known to have been smuggled; and he (the Attorney General) believed, that if one puncheon of liquor that had paid the duty, and another that hadnot, were simultaneously offered for sale in the same district, a decided preference would be given by the consumers to the smuggled article. But were a prohibitory Liquor Law in operation, there would be little or no inducement to smuggle. Now, the smuggler is secure almost as soon as he succeeds in getting his liquor landed; but under the provisions of a prohibitory enactment, his troubles would but then commence. At the same time that he would find no market to reward his pains, he would find excisemen everywhere both ready and willing to take the necessary measures to prevent the traffic being carried on. The difficulty to be apprehended from this quarter was not, in his opinion, by any means so formidable as—judging from the stress laid thereon by honorable members—many of them seemed to suppose. It was stated the other evening, that this question was brought forward and advocated simply to advance party purposes. Well—admitting that political purposes or objects were to be promoted thereby—he put it to the honorable Chairman to say whether it was or was not better for the interest of the public to bring forward sober men and sober measures, than drunken men and drunken measures. To secure the opposite results, it was only necessary that those interested should allow intemperance and drunkenness to prevail; and he (the Attorney General), had no doubt, that this had formerly been the mode pretty generally in use; but for his part, of what shade soever a man's politics might be, he would prefer the former alternative. He (the Attorney General) was of opinion, that a majority of the community were in favour of this law, and that the only thing now needed was sufficient moral courage to put it in force. One hon. member (Mr. Mooney) had said, the previous evening, that they ought to delay passing this Law until it was ascertained whether a majority of the people were in favour of it or otherwise. The House should, he (the Attorney General) admitted, defer as much as possible to the feelings of the country. But hon. members must be aware, that a vast variety of questions had been taken up and carried through the Legislature, which never originated with the people at all, and would not, in all probability, have so originated. The people expect, in this Colony, as elsewhere, to be led in matters of this nature, by their representatives, and he felt assured, that if the Assembly came forward boldly and passed this Law, they would be backed up by the country at large, let them test them on the subject as they would. Of course, a measure of this nature would have its opponents; bu it would be better, in his estimation, to give compensation to all who are gaining a living by the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors, than to suffer so pernicious a traffic any longer to continue in existence. Thousands of Pounds of the people's money are now cheerfully given every year, to promote the cause of general Education, because we believe ourselves morally bound to see that the people are educated, on the principle that an educated man is, generally speaking, of more value to the State than an uneducated one; but should the House, at the same time, say that a sober man is not as valuable as a drunken one? In his opinion the moral obligation was as binding in the one case as the other. It is now rendered compulsory on the inhabitants to educate their children, and in like manner should compulsion be employed, if necessary, to put an end to the intolerable vice of drunkenness. To accomplish this object, there appeared to him to be but one effectual and proper mode, and that mode was, to shut up the traffic altogether. He confessed, that at one time, he thought, that this could not be done; but he was now of a different opinion. The Revenue of the Colony could not, he repeated, be injuriously affected, if at all, for a longer period than one or two years, by the proposed change; and although he regretted that this matter was not taken up in what appeared to him, a more liberal and enlightened spirit, especially by some honorable gentlemen with whom he generally acted in concert, yet he was now more clearly convinced, both by reason and reflection, of the imperative necessity for legislative action in this matter.

Mr. Davies did not think the Resolution submitted by him should, in fairness, be treated as it had been by the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown (the Attorney General.) The line of argument adopted by that hon. gentleman with reference thereto was not at all likely, in his (Mr. Davies's) estimation, to add much to the list of his (the Attorney Ghneral's) admirers. He (Mr. Davis) had merely submitted a Resolution calculated, in his opinion, to carry out that honorable gentleman's views, and to supply a want which he, as Leader of the present majority in the House of Assembly, had failed to do. He (Mr. D.) did not say, however, that he meant to support the proposition himself. His chief object was to lay it upon the Table, for the purpose of enlightening honorable members and suggesting a mode of rendering complete what must, otherwise be regarded as a very lame Resolution. The honorable member (Mr. Davies), then proceeded to defend his views on the subject of the Quit Rents, to which allusion had been made by the honorable the Attorney General, contending that his views with reference thereto were anything but ridiculous—the Title Deeds clearly showing, that at least £2000 are now due to the Government by each Township in this Island; and he was satisfied that if the Sons of Temperancee would but go with him in endeavouring to procure the large sum due to the Colony in the shape of Quit Rents, they would infallibly succeed in their efforts to abolish the Liquor Traffic for they would be sure of carrying the whole Island with them. Whilst cutting off the revenue derivable from the traffic in ardent spirits, they would also be in a position to appropriate a sufficient sum as a compensation, to those who had embarked their capital in the business for the loss they would sustain by its extinction.

Mr. H. Haviland thought it was intended that hon. members should, on the present occasion, confine their observations to the propriety or otherwise, of enacting a prohibitory Liquor Law, as that, it appeared to him, was the matter then under discussion ; it would, however, almost appear, from the tenor of some hon gentlemen's remarks, that that question was a matter of but secondary consideration. The question before the House was, whether it was for the benefit of the people to prohibit the Traffic in Intoxicating drinks or not. As to the details of the measure, these were but matters of secondary consideration. The grand point, it appeared to him, was, is it expedient, and, if expedient, it is right, to comply with the prayer of the Petitions, then lying on the Table of the House One of the arguments advanced in opposition to the proposed measure was, the loss of Revenue that would be occasioned thereby ; but he (Mr. Haviland) thought the House had nothing whatever to do with that question just now. If, by adopting the course suggested by the Petitioners they could be the means of eradicating an evil of incalculable magnitude, and, at the same time, improving the morals of the people, it was, he thought, clearly the duty of the House to undertake the task, even if their doing so, necessitated a loss of the entire Revenue of the Colony. He was not about to give a milk-and-water opinion on the subject, like some hon. members. He had given the matter a great deal of consideration. At the commencement of the present Session he confessed that his mind was undecided ; but he had now come to the conclusion that it would be decidedly for the benefit of the people of this Island, if the Traffic in all intoxicating liquors were at once abolished. A large amount of eloquence had recently been expended on this important subject elsewhere, and he did not, therefore, deem it at all necessary that he should enter upon any lengthened course of argumentation in support of his present views. It was not because he disliked Wine, that he would vote in favor of a prohibitory measure, but simply because he believed the principle was a sound and salutary one. He would support the Resolution of the hon and learnsd member for Charlottetown (the Attorney General.)

The Hon. Mr. Lord felt himself quite as independent, in this matter, as the hon. and learned member for Georgetown (Mr. H. Haviland) ; and even if he could not make as eloquent a speech, he would, at least, support an honest measure, Perhaps the present was a "milk-and-water" question. for when the Liquor traffic was done away, they would, perhaps, be glad to resort occasionally, to that wholesome beverage.

Mr. Davies thought the hon. member (Mr. H. Haviland) must have misunderstood his remarks. If the present was a "milk-and-water" discussion, so much the better.

Mr. H. Haviland said it would not do for hon. members to indulge in special pleading on the floor of the House with him. He had asserted that the speech of the hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Lord) was a milk-and-water affair, and he would again repeat the assertion. It was neither one thing nor another ; and it was quite clear that if he found it convenient to do so, the hon. gentleman would vote in favor of the Resolution ; but if not, he would vote against it.

Hon. Mr. Lord was very much obliged to the hon. member (Mr. H. Haviland) for his explanation ; but he begged to assure hon. members that he did not advocate a measure of this nature for the sake, merely, of courting popularity.

The Hon. Mr. Warburton thought, that whilst the speeches hitherto delivered by hon. members, in support of the Resolution, were of a very "milk-and-water" character, the Resolution of the hon. member for Charlottetown, (the Attorney General) was not less so. If he were a supporter of the mersure, he would shew his sincerity by voting that it go int operation at once ; but as he was decidedly not in favor of it, hon. members should have no reason to accuse him of inconsistency or insincerity. He would oppose the Maine Law, because he considered it an unwarrantable infringement of the rights of individuals as well as of the British Constitution. Under this Law it was intended, he believed, that a Warrant should be issued to search any suspected person's house for Liquor. If such were the nature of the Law intended to be introduced here, the sooner we ceased to be British subjects the better. He did not believe the majority of the people were in favor of such a Law. The signatures to the Petitions lying on the Table numbered, he was informed, some 5,000 men, women and children ; but he, for one, would not advocate so extreme and sweeping a measure, until he saw that there was a clear majority of the people in its favor.

Mr. Mooney began to see how the affair was going to be settled. Last evening, he thought the hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. H. Haviland) intended to oppose this measure. [Mr. H. Haviland, "I did not speak at all."] Perhaps, like himself (Mr. Mooney) that hon. gentleman liked a helping hand when the Reporter was at the desk; and as they were kept in the dark, last night, in consequence of the absence of that functionary, he thought it would be as well to go over the same ground again. The debate of last night seemed to him a total failure. The Leader of the Government (Mr. Attorney General) seemed so quiet, that he could not help thinking he really did not wish to carry his own Resolution. But as for him (Mr. Mooney), if he could fix the hon. and learned gentleman in a net, he would do it; and he would candidly tell that hon. gentleman, that, to secure this object, he would vote either way. The hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. M'Aulay) claimed to be the father of this measure. [No ! from Mr. M'Aulay.] Well then, he said he was its uncle; but, for his part, he (Mr. Mooney) thought the hon. gentleman had no right whatsoever to either appellation. [The hon. member here made a somewhat lengthy digression, referring to other times and to other scenes, as well as to other questions, which elicited considerable impatience on the part of several hon. members, particularly of Mr. Clark.] The mind of the hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Clark) continued Mr. Mooney, appeared so entirely absorbed with this question, that if any of his observations did not exactly tally with his (Mr. Clark's) views, the hon gentleman appeared like a fish out of water. But if his observations did not exactly suit that hon. gentleman, he could not help it. He would, nevertheless, endeavour to speak to the question as well as he could. With regard to the question of compensation to parties who may be injured by this measure, he was of opinion that if it was advisable to abolish the Liquor Traffic by Law, no man was entitled to compensatirn. The hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Yeo) had certainly made a very alarming statement, viz: that a poor man in his neighbourhood had lost a few Cows, in consequence of his having sold all his fodder for liquor, and the next step would be to assert that every cow that died, perished through Rum and Whiskey. The hon. gentleman then proceeded in his characteristically droll style, to comment on the Lecture of the Rev. Mr. Narraway, recently delivered in the Temperance Hall, printed copies of which had been supplied to hon. members. The object of the hon. member appeared to be, not exactly to controvert the Rev. Gentleman's arguments, but to shew that too much stress was laid, by the advocates of the measure, upon any circumstance, however timid, that appeared at all likely to favor their views; that, in short, these honest people sometimes indulge in gross exaggeration and misrepresentation on these subjects. Was it, said the hon. member, the drinking of liquor that impoverished Ireland, and made it what it is? He had seen it stated in a school-book at Mr. Haszard's the other day, that no other nation on the face of the earth was so temperate as the Irish. He thought the advocates of this measure too frequently sought to draw wool over the eyes of the people; and if it were not so, how was it, he asked, that they did not more frequently and generally come forward and sow the seeds of reform, and not confine their efforts so exclusively to the doing away with liquor? After the last General Election, it was said that the Maine Law would pass ; but, for his part, he did not believe it would. The Leader of the present Government (the Attorney General) though he could insure its passing if he would, would, in his opinion, do anything rather than that. It was true that hon. members prevented by that hon gentleman, at the commencement of the Session, from taking a glass within the walls of the House—and perhaps it was necessary that it should be so—but whether it was or not, he did not know—and he was proud to observe the regulation was so well observed. If the hon. member (the Attorney General) would say, unequivocally, that he was prepared to pass a Maine Liquor Bill this Session, he would give him credit for sincerity, but he was now beginning to doubt him. He, however, once voted with that hon. and learned gentleman, and he might, perhaps do it again.

Mr. Heath Haviland said Mr. Mooney had taunted him with being silent on the previous evening, when this matter was under discussion. But that hon. gentleman should know, that silence is generally construed as giving consent to a measure, and not the reverse. Several other gentlemen seemed surprised at the course he had adopted during the present discussion ; but when he informed hon. members that so late as last night he had not made up his mind as to how he ought to vote on this important question, their surprise would, perhaps, cease. There was but one question which he found it difficult to solve in his own mind. He was decidedly in favor of the principle of the measure ; but he apprehended that if the mass of the people were not in favor of the measure, there would be a very serious reaction ; and that was the reason why he had not sooner made up his mind on the question. When he reflected, that if a majority of the people were adverse to this measure, it was perfectly natural to suppose that dozens and dozens of petitions would be presented against it. But instead of this, only one solitary petition had been presented against it, and that contained but one solitary signature, the name of a man of unsound mind. He therefore came to the conclusion that public opinion could not be opposed to a measure of this nature, and he should give it his warmest support. The late Government had altered the Franchise, without the presentation of a single petition in its favor. There was no necessity for delay, nor waiting to ascertain the public sentiment—urged by hon. members when that important measure was before the House. The hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Warburton) viewed this matter as an infringement of private rights. Roads were constantly being run through private property, which was equally an invasion of private rights. The hon. member for King's County (Mr. Whelan) had brought in and carried through the House a Bill to prohibit the sale of arsenic, &c., which was equally an infringement of private rights. But it was alleged that arsenic was a poison, and that therefore it was right and proper to restrict its sale. He (Mr. H. Haviland) looked upon intoxicating liquor as poison, and therefore that it was equally right and proper to prohibit its sale ; and as to the falling off in the revenue, apprehended by some hon. members, he viewed that as a mere bugbear. Hon. members did not, he thought, consider that question when advocating the introduction of Responsible Government.

Mr. Clark had spoken to the general question on the previous evening, and he now rose mainly to reply to some objections urged by hon. members. Some of these he could not but regard as extremely flimsy indeed. The hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Lord) was unwilling to sanction a prohibitory enactment, unless compensation were provided for those who had embarked their capital in the business. But he (Mr. Clark) did not think that the parties to whom he alluded—some of whom were his own particular friends—possessed the shadow of a claim to compensation. Other businesses had been destroyed by legislative enactment, when the public interest required it ; and he saw no reason why a similar course should not be pursued with respect to the traffic under consideration. It was true that compensation had been awarded to the slaveholders in the West Indies, on the abolition of Negro slavery, by the British Government ; but theirs was an extreme case. The House, he had no doubt, would be willing to afford ample time to those engaged in the liquor traffic to wind up their business and devote their capital to other and more legitimate pursuits. The hon. member (Mr. Lord) was in favor of suspending the operation of the Law until the 1st January, 1846, and he (Mr. Clark) thought it would, perhaps, be better to do so. The hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. H. Haviland) had stated, that so late as last night he had not made up his mind as to how he should vote on the question, being afraid that the passage of the proposed Law might possibly do more harm than good. He (Mr. Clark) was of opinion that no great reform was ever accomplished, either in Church or State, without a previous bold and uncompromising advocacy of its principles ; and for his part, he would say, after mature deliberation, that the House should at once affirm the principle laid down in the Resolution before them. With regard to its being an infringement of private rights, he (Mr. Clark) thought that if there was any infringement of private rights connected with the subject, it arose from those who made and sold intoxicating liquors—these were the parties who, in his opinion, infringed private rights ; but to prohibit the traffic was, in his estimation, no infringement whatever of those rights. Scarcely a law was passed but might, in a certain sense, be considered an infringement of private rights. Laws were passed to protect the health and lives of the community ; parties were authorized to enter private houses and interfere, to a certain extent, with domestic arrangements ; even the sweeping of chimneys was rendered compulsory, at proper intervals. Laws were also passed to protect the lives of dumb animals. What, then, was to prevent their protecting the lives of the community from that which he, for one, considered a dangerous and deadly poison—an article which had been productive of more evil than all other causes put together. Of this he felt quite satisfied. The hon. member for Queen's County (Mr. Mooney) argued, that because other evils were rife in the community, the Legislature possessed no right to interfere or attempt to put a stop to the vice of drunkenness. He had gravely asked, "Were there no farmers except the drunken, who neglected to till their land, or who failed to bestow proper attention upon their homesteads?" He (Mr. Clark) admitted that there were ; but at the same time, he knew that drunkenness was, by far, the most fruitful source of idleness and vice extant. The hon. gentleman then proceeded to combat the argument of the hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Warburton), that the proposed law was unconstitutional, and quoted several high authorities in support of an opposite opinion. Wherever the Law had been fairly tested, continued the hon. member, its effects had been found most beneficial. It was true it had been, and no doubt would still be violated occasionally, by unprincipled and lawless characters. But what law, he would like to know, had not been violated? He considered the occasional violation of the law no argument at all against its enactment. If enacted here to-morrow, some liquor would, he had no doubt, be smuggled into the Colony ; but were intoxicating liquors outlawed, as they ought to be, the preventive officers and magistrates would be much more vigilant and successful in their