

1384. The Canada Temperance Act is in force in one district in the Province of Quebec, in two in the Province of Manitoba, in 11 in the Province of Nova Scotia, in 11 in the Province of New Brunswick and 4 in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

In the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia the Act is no where in force. One county in Quebec province (Richmond) is under the Dunkin Act.

1385. According to the returns there were during the period 1884-94, 132,287 convictions for drunkenness. This is an average of 12,026 a year. The convictions in 1894 were 11,558. They were therefore 468 below the average. The annual average of the period 1884-94 is 2,394 convictions in every 1,000,000 of the people. The convictions have, therefore, decreased 4 per cent in 1894, as compared with the average of the 1884-94 period. It is, of course, impossible to tell whether this decrease is due to decrease in drinking or to decrease in activity of prosecuting those who get drunk.

1386. The convictions for drunkenness in the several provinces are given in the following table :—

It appears from this table that in 1894 out of every group of 667 of the inhabitants of Ontario one had been convicted of drunkenness, out of every group of 359 of the people of Quebec one had been convicted of drunkenness, while in the Province of Nova Scotia one out of every group of 361 had been so convicted. Ranged according to position with respect to sobriety, as tested by convictions, the provinces stand thus : Ontario, Prince Edward Island, The Territories, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Manitoba, New Brunswick and British Columbia. In the returns of 1892, as in previous years, the convictions before the North-west Mounted Police were not included.

The commissioners appointed to investigate the liquor traffic say :—

“The convictions for drunkenness and offences against the liquor laws, taking the whole Dominion, reached the highest point in 1888, since which date there has been a gradual reduction in the total of the combined offences. The Scott Act ceased to be in force in 10 counties in 1888 and in 19 counties in 1889 in which it had been previously adopted, and the Dunkin Act was put in force in one county, viz., Richmond, Quebec, in 1888.

“The convictions for drunkenness, taken separately, continued to increase from 1888 to 1890, when they reached the highest figure shown in the returns. From this date there has been a steady reduction, the ratio per 1,000 of the population being smaller in 1892 than in any year subsequent to 1894. The percentage of convictions for drunkenness to the total convictions was less in 1892 than in any year subsequent to 1880.”

The more recent years, 1893 and 1894, indicate a continued improvement, especially 1894, when in every group of 435 persons throughout the Dominion one was convicted of drunkenness, as against one in every group of 341 persons in 1890.