

PENDING LIQUOR LEGISLATION.

The question of the further restriction of the liquor traffic in Ontario is again before the legislators of the Province; not as yet formally; it has been informally discussed by the Premier and his followers, in order that Mr. Ross might see the length to which his majority of three would be willing to go. Presumably this was the Premier's essential first step as a parliamentary majority is the only machinery through which temperance or any other legislation can find its way to the statute book. According to the reports the Premier's followers are not entirely agreed as to the extent or nature of the legislation to be enacted. It would be satisfactory, were it possible, for the leaders and members on both sides to agree upon some advanced measure of temperance reform, but of this no sign appears on the horizon. The one outstanding fact appears to be the Premier stands considerably in advance of the bulk of the representatives on either side as to the scope of the measure which should be introduced.

Looking back fifty years, it is pleasant to note during all that period legislation on the liquor question has been progressively restrictive. There has apparently never during that time been a year in which a measure of complete prohibition could have been carried. But every step has been a step in the shape of additional prohibition by so much. A mass of sentiment in favor of further restriction now confronts the legislators of Ontario. Reasonable people do not expect impossibilities from those who happen to occupy the responsibilities of official political position; they know one cannot obtain omelets without eggs, nor restrictive legislation without legislative majorities; nor do they expect improbabilities of magnanimity from Outs who naturally desire to be Ins.

Still, there is an interest of more importance than the rival interest of Ins and Outs; we mean that of the great mass of excellent people on both sides of politics who honestly desire the public well-being, and who instinctively realize that latitude for the liquor traffic spells ill being for the community. Let another step forward now be taken; the longer the step that can be safely and expediently taken, and for which a legislative majority can be obtained, so much the better.

The annuitants on both the Aged and Infirm Ministers and the Widows' and Orphans' Fund are requested to return without delay to the Rev. Dr. Warden, the slips sent them giving their present address. Their special attention to this is requested.

Rev. D. G. McQueen, of Edmonton, preaching in Toronto in the interest of Presbyterian missions in the west, said the Mormons were aiming at obtaining a controlling position in the politics of the Territories. Our Church has three mission stations among the Mormons, but their work had been rather to prevent the influencing of Canadians by the alien sect.

LET US HAVE PEACE.

As we go to press the Commission of Assembly, on the Central India Mission difficulty, is meeting in Toronto, specially to consider the proposal of the friends of Rev. Dr. Wilkie, that the church in some way recognize the new mission which they propose to start in Gwalior, Central India.

In January last the Foreign Mission Committee, by a narrow majority of two, refused to start a new mission in which Dr. Wilkie might work. They urged him to join the American Presbyterian Church, offering to pay his salary to that church if he would accept. This he refused as it could only lead to misunderstanding. It practically meant that though as a church we want missionaries yet we have no use for one of our oldest and most experienced ones; and so anxious are we to get rid of him that we will gladly pay his salary to any society that will take him off our hands.

The friends of Dr. Wilkie organized in February to go on with a new mission believing they represent the feelings of the greater part of the church more thoroughly than does the majority of the F. M. C. These friends are, however, most anxious to avoid continued discord over this troublesome question; and so desire, if possible, to have the church in some way recognize their efforts, and with this desirable object in view they have approached the Commission of Assembly. There is room for the new effort in such a large and unoccupied territory; and as the section chosen for work is about 200 miles from the present mission, there should be little chance for further friction. As the others in the field have now got all the results of Dr. Wilkie's long services then they surely can afford to be, at least, so generous as to leave him alone as he starts out again to do pioneer work in a new and difficult field. As to the influence at home of the members of the present F. M. C. who are opposed to Dr. Wilkie continue to oppose and interfere with the new movement it can only lead to greater difficulty. If, on the other hand, they and others, who may not be able to approve, can only give it at least the privilege of proving whether it is a movement the Master wants, it may be possible to go on in peace; and all will sooner or later come back again under the full control of the church.

The cry "it is divisive" is an old one and to some quite enough to hinder all countenance. As we do not believe in an infallible church organization any more than in an infallible Pope, it is hard to understand the position of some in this matter. Luther, Calvin, Knox, and even Christ Himself were all 'divisive' in the sense that term is now so often used. Majorities must ordinarily rule; but majorities have often been in the wrong. Only by the decided action of the minority have we to-day the civil and religious liberty we enjoy.

The friends of Dr. Wilkie are not in this effort opposing the F. M. work of the church, though they have not that confidence in the administration of the present majority of the F. M. C. that enables them to support it. They are trying honestly to bridge over the breach that has been caused; to give those interested in missions to India an opportunity of carrying out their wish; and of saving the necessity for further agitation in the church that has long been doing harm. If the church can in some way throw its mantle over the new effort it will be a

blessing, as it will result in giving the church another mission, in a new and needy field in India. The friends of Dr. Wilkie cannot be accused of rash impatience anyway, as they so earnestly and so long have been urging the church to take the work under its care and do at least this small measure of justice to Dr. Wilkie who having been deprived of the fruit of all his efforts in the past, may still be able to give his energy and experience to the people in whom he is so deeply interested. For nearly two years now these friends have been trying to get the church to do what they consider necessary and what they believe the majority of the church, also wish, but in which they have been opposed by a narrow but determined majority on the F. M. C.

The Commission has therefore to decide whether a narrow majority of two in the F. M. C. is to rule and override the wish of the church.

Almost the whole of the \$4000.00 which was set down as the initial cost of the new mission has been secured and that too within between two and three weeks; and a number of sessions have already expressed their hearty sympathy and intention of co-operation with the new movement.

The dark places of the earth, to a lamentable extent, continue to be "the haunts of horror and cruelty." At a missionary meeting in London recently, a missionary of the C. M. S., from Western Equatorial Africa pointed out that there were over a hundred languages still in Africa awaiting translation, and that there were many tribes untouched by Christianity. He also gave a saddening description of the people and their practices. There were, he said, certain places on the banks of the Niger where it was not safe to land without an escort. Cannibalism was rife, and all through the eastern section of the country it was the custom after a raid or battle to kill all the enemy who were captured. Not only twin children, but children born in certain ways and having certain characteristics were regularly exposed to death. They found in the low reaches of the Niger that the worship of charms and the power of the medicine man were paramount.

A Minister in a Western congregation recently made a desperate attempt to get the women to remove their head-gear in church, so as to prevent obstruction of view. But he failed, and now knows what the philosophical rhymster discovered about collective woman, namely: "When she will, she will, you may depend on't; When she won't, she won't, and there's an end on't." A correspondent writes: "I went to church last Sunday morning, as usual, but found my view of the minister obstructed by a widespread hat worn by a woman directly in front. As I dodged my head from side to side, I am sorry to say my thoughts were not altogether such as were befitting to the place and occasion. For these thoughts, and for any lack of concentration in following the sermon, who is to blame—myself, or the lady with the monstrously large head-gear? If editors know everything, would you kindly suggest a remedy for what, without interding a pun, I may call a widespread grievance."