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THE TEMPERANCE SITUATION IN NOVA SCOTIA AND HALIFAX

(By "Bluenose" in Christian Guardian.)

The traffic in alcoholic beverages in Nova Scotia is carried on under three different statutes. There is a license law for the City of Halifax; the Canada Temperance Act, commonly known as the Scott Act, still operating in five counties; and the Nova Scotia Temperance Act, which has come into force automatically in twelve of the eighteen counties by the repeal of the old Nova Scotia License Act, or by the repeal of the Scott Act. The Nova Scotia Temperance Alliance is working strenuously to bring the whole province under the Nova Scotia Temperance Act, which is now one of the best laws ever formulated for the suppression of the traffic, if properly enforced. Annapolis County has already voted in favor of repealing the Scott Act, but appeal has been taken by the liquor interests, and the repeal has not been granted. A vote to bring about the repeal of the Scott Act in the remaining five Counties will be taken within a year. The procedure for securing such repeal entails a great deal of work and needs to be most carefully attended to; but the successful repeal of the Act in four counties a year ago with large majorities has caused the liquor interests to tremble and also to do their utmost to keep the Scott Act in force.

It seems strange to read of campaigns in Ontario, with the temperance people urging the adoption of the Scott Act, and of campaigns in Nova Scotia where the liquor dealers are the champions of that act. Of course the explanation is that the Nova Scotia counties have a superior law in the Nova Scotia Temperance Act, to which our liquor dealers are much more averse than to the Scott Act, the regulations of which they have been able to defy or circumvent. The eagerness of the liquor interests to preserve the Scott Act and their active opposition against the adoption of the Nova Scotia Temperance Act, served to secure for the repeal of the Scott Act the votes of many who were previously in doubt as to the wisdom of that action. What the liquor trade wanted was not what the patriotic voter wanted, and so their interference in the polls on this question has served to help their opponents rather than themselves.

There is every likelihood that another year will see the whole province under the Provincial Prohibition Act, with the possible exception of Halifax which is the last trench held by the liquor party, and where they have been able to exert an amazing influence over civic and provincial authorities. But their hold on this territory is growing weaker, and there is a possibility that another year may find Halifax city with all the rest of the Province under the Prohibition Act, and no licenses issued after Feb. 15th, 1916. That is the great purpose the allied temperance forces have before them at this time. Halifax is the great "Hohenzollern redoubt" of the liquor traffic, both metaphorically and literally, for what greater ally has the Kaiser than the liquor business, which is destroying the efficiency of so many of our soldiers and sailors right in Halifax? And so the temperance forces are planning to bring up all their artillery and make a determined assault upon this citadel and demand that the Provincial Government refuse to renew the licenses another year and there is much encouragement for hoping that the request will be granted.

When the Nova Scotia Temperance Act was passed a clause was inserted exempting Halifax from the operation of that Act, but providing for a plebiscite on the requisition of one-fourth of the rate-payers, and promising to bring the city under the act if a majority so voted. But if this plebiscite failed to secure a majority vote in favor, no petition for taking a vote for and against the granting of licenses could be presented to the council for three years.

This clause has never been taken advantage of by the no-license temperance people. It has served rather to divide the temperance forces, especially in the city. The Provincial Temperance Alliance has persistently and consistently disapproved of this plan from the beginning. A small fraction of the Halifax branch have favored it, believing that there was no doubt as to the issue, for in every plebiscite (and there have been three) the city has given a majority in favor of prohibition.

The Provincial Alliance argue that the License Act was placed on the statute books of the Province without the consent of the Halifax people by the Legislature. The licenses are granted by authority of the province and not of the city. It is, therefore, a matter for provincial consideration and provincial enactment. Without consulting the people of other counties and towns which were under the license law, the Legislature placed them under the operation of the Nova Scotia Temperance Act, and can and should do the same for Halifax. To adopt the suggestion of the act and hold

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a plebiscite would mean, in case of an adverse vote, three years more of the saloon evil. It would mean the lifting of the responsibility from the shoulders of the legislature where it now rests, and placing it upon the shoulders of the citizens of Halifax, who are not responsible for the present conditions. The plebiscite is thus only a scheme whereby the Government has endeavored, as good politicians, to escape the responsibility for dealing the traffic a deadly blow, and thus incurring the opposition of those engaged in it, who have been careful to cultivate the friendship of the political leaders. Moreover, a plebiscite would entail the expenditure of thousands of dollars by the temperance people, and give the liquor party opportunity to use all the vile arts of which they are masters to corrupt electors and carry on a campaign of lies. The probability is that Halifax will never have a plebiscite; as I have said, there is reason to hope that this year the Legislature will do its duty and bring Halifax under the Nova Scotia Temperance Act. Now what reason have we for being so optimistic?

1. The growing opposition to the iniquitous License Act, which forces the saloons on this city whether it wants them or not. The law is such that fewer than 1,100 out of 7,000 rate-payers have any chance to express themselves as for or against license when the matter comes up each year. Licenses are obtained by securing the signatures of three-fifths of the resident ratepayers of a section of a ward on the requisition papers. Under this system, in one section which has but forty-five resident ratepayers the licenses of three large hotels are granted on the requisition of twenty-seven ratepayers. One hundred and fifty-eight ratepayers are all that are necessary to obtain the privileges of all the five wholesale licenses which are obtained on requisition of only one half of the resident ratepayers. Ratepayers have nothing to say about the brewers' licenses, which are granted by council. So the bigger the devil the less opportunity the people of the city have to fight it.

The License Commission have no authority to change the terms under which a license has been granted. That is why there has been nothing done to curtail the hours of sale or otherwise restrict the traffic during the war, while so many sailors are making this their headquarters. Meanwhile a spirit of resentment against the shocking conditions that now prevail is growing more menacing to the traffic, which is now manifesting its real debasing, devilish character as never before. Representative men of the city will back up representatives from the province in a demand for the refusal of any licenses for another year.

2. The people of the province realize that conditions in Halifax are a menace to the whole province. Parents tremble when they know their sons in college and business and in the army are exposed to this evil in the capital city. Many mothers are less fearful of their sons killed in Europe or coming home with an arm less or sightless eyes than they are of their moral ruin by the licensed liquor traffic in Halifax, and pressure will be brought to bear on the several county representatives to vote this winter to eliminate the licensed bar.

Strong party men are warning their representatives that if they fail to do so this year they will not support them in the coming elections if they seek to be returned.

3. This will be the last session of the Legislature before an election, and elections have gone against the Government, wholly on this issue, and in view of the steady growth of the prohibition sentiment, the premier will hardly dare face the electorate of the province without having first bowed to the wishes of the temperance people. It will be good politics this year, and the strongest appeal of the Government for their return to power will be the enactment of a law that brings all the province, including Halifax, under the operations of the Nova Scotia Temperance Act.

4. All the Churches, including the Roman Catholic, are planning to make their influence felt. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists are bringing pressure to bear upon the Government, and at their annual gatherings have declared that prohibition is the only solution of the liquor problem.

The Presbyterian Church, at the meeting of the Maritime Synod in St. John recently, elected for moderator, Rev. H. R. Grant, the secretary of the Nova Scotia Temperance Alliance. That shows where the Presbyterian Church stands, and will give Mr. Grant added prestige when he presents the views of the temperance people to the premier this winter.

The Alliance has increased in strength from year to year. It was at first looked upon by the Government as a Tory plot, and given little attention and less respect. Now everyone knows that the Alliance knows no political party, and that its only politics is a province without a licensed saloon and under prohibition. The Alliance is going to win; it does not care through which party. It has its supporters on both sides of the House. Last winter prohibition for all the province was lost by the casting vote of the Speaker and the suspicious absence from the House of a member who had pledged to vote in favor of prohibition. Altogether the signs are favorable for a dry Nova Scotia after this year.

The pearl fisheries of Ceylon are said to be the oldest industry in the world. For more than three thousand years the pearl-oyster harvest has been gathered by the natives, who, skilled in diving, have handed down the industry from one generation to the next. The greatest care is taken lest, when the shells of the bivalves are opened, any of the precious gems be lost or stolen. Even the shells are very carefully examined and the dried dust of the oyster carefully sifted.

The American Bible Society's agent in Petrograd writes that since the war began and the vodka shops were closed, the sale of Bibles and Testaments has greatly increased in Russia. This is outside the special demand for Bibles for sick and wounded soldiers.

There are, according to reports of the Student Volunteer Movement in China, about 900 men now preparing for the ministry there.

ORDEAL OF RUSSIAN PEASANTRY

Two Million Homeless Wanderers

(By Stanley Washburn in the "London Times" Weekly)

Headquarters, Oct. 15.

When Russia capitalizes her climate and geography and the temperament of her people she commands a military asset which promises to prove a barrier against which the human mechanism of the Germans, with all its perfection of machinery and efficiency, will wreck itself. In travelling here from Moscow by motor car I purposely covered many back roads in order to question the peasants, so that I might form some conclusion as to whether the war is really backed by the people themselves. On the high roads I passed, without exaggeration, above 100,000 refugees, and I have questioned great numbers of these poor people about their opinion of the war and its outcome.

In one town there were camped 83,000 refugees, representing 12 different governments in the war zone, and the sum total of their opinions may certainly be taken as typical of the peasant point of view generally. Practically all of them had abandoned their homes before the German invasion. From conversation with the officials who have to deal with them as well as with the peasants themselves, I found that a large majority have accepted their lot absolutely without complaint, recognizing it as a necessary incident of a military move designed to impede the enemy and delay his advance. The entire highway to-day is steeped in the traditions of 1812, and the superintendent of a certain post-house before which hundreds of refugees were camped informed me that every one talks of the events of to-day as they were wont to do of the campaign of Napoleon. They feel that they are playing their part to defeat the hated enemy, as their fathers did before them, hoping for an early and cold winter, in order that their enemy may perish of cold and starvation—and this regardless of the sufferings that the winter may bring for themselves. After talking to groups of these homeless wanderers, amounting to hundreds, I found not a single one who expressed a wish that the war might terminate before the Germans are defeated utterly. I have heard the same comment again and again—

"We must win now, regardless of the cost and the time it takes. The sacrifices we have suffered are too great to hesitate at anything short of victory."

The Problem of Relief

The Russian Government is straining every nerve to relieve the condition of these refugees, and is preparing shelters all along the highways. It is estimated that the refugees number approximately two million, and it may be imagined what this problem represents. The task of the Government is greatly lightened by the docility and patience of the peasants, whose behaviour as I was told repeatedly, has been absolutely perfect in this hour of misery and hardship. Only when you are covering this country by road can you realize the enormous distances. The distance from the Dvina front to Petrograd is almost as great as from Berlin to Warsaw, and from the front in the centre to Moscow is actually not much less than a hundred miles further. Between lies the bleak and desolate landscape which was made historic in 1812, nearly every mile representing the futile efforts of the enemy to withstand the devastating climate which in late October settles over Russia, burying the fields several feet deep in snow and freezing the ground deeply. Already the nip of the coming winter is in the air, and whether the analogy is true otherwise the spectre of 1812 looms behind every German soldier to-day. When a group of German prisoners was met on the roads marching eastwards the first questions asked as they gazed apprehensively at a landscape grey and desolate beneath a leaden sky, was of the Russian winter, when it would fall, and how long it would endure.

In general I find the peasant refugees are extraordinary well informed regarding the war and the Russian policy of retreat. The peasants of the villages of the interior, though they are ignorant of the conditions and causes of the present position, show the same stubborn qualities and the same willingness to make sacrifices that one sees in the soldiers at the front. These swarms of refugees pouring eastward are veritable missionaries preaching hatred of the enemy and the necessity of fighting the war to a finish. With each successive wave which sweeps eastward the determination of the peasantry increases. The German soldiers realize that the hatred against them is grow-

ing daily in every peasant hut from the front to Moscow, and in face of the willingness of these simple people to continue the war to extermination, their dreams of ultimate success, if they still cherish them, must have been rudely shattered.

I am remaining here for a few days in order to endeavor to obtain a perspective of the present position of the campaign.

FRUIT TREE DISEASES

"Fruit Tree Diseases of Southern Ontario" is the title of a very instructive Bulletin (No. 24 of the second series of Bulletins of the Dominion Experimental Farms), of which Mr. W. A. McCubbin, M. A., Assistant in charge of the Dominion Plant Pathological Laboratory, St. Catharines, Ont., is the author. In this Bulletin prepared under the direction of Mr. H. T. Gussow, Dominion Botanist, 14 diseases of the apple tree, 5 of the pear tree, 4 of the quince, 7 of the apricot, 5 of the cherry, 7 of the plum tree and 12 of the peach, are dealt with. In each case there is given a description of the diseases and their nature; information is furnished for their identification, and various means of prevention and control are outlined. In addition to these descriptions, the value of which is greatly enhanced by numerous original illustrations, the opening chapter deals in a general manner with disease, its nature, types of disease due to various fungi, transmission of spores, wintering of diseases, infection, methods of meeting diseases, and other causes of unhealthy conditions, as winter injury, dieback, bud injury, sun scald, crown or collar rot, etc. Directions are also given for sending specimens attacked by unidentified diseases to the Dominion Botanist. The preparation of the several fungicides—sprays, washes, and disinfectants is also outlined. The author clearly shows that timely attention to the control of destructive fungus diseases will save considerable waste and losses and will result in increased production, a factor, ever important, but at this present time most important to observe. This Bulletin is available to applicants to The Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario.

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