

The Camp Fire.

A. MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

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NOTE.—It is proposed to make this the cheapest Temperance paper in the world, taking into consideration its size, the matter it contains and the price at which it is published.

Every friend of temperance is earnestly requested to assist in this effort by subscribing and by sending in facts or arguments that might be of interest or use to our workers.

The editor will be thankful for correspondence upon any topic connected with the temperance reform. Our limited space will compel condensation. No letter for publication should contain more than two hundred words—if shorter, still better.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1897.

THE BEGINNING.

The Dominion Parliament is summoned to meet for business on the 11th of March. We look confidently for a bill providing for a Dominion Plebiscite on the prohibition question as one of the earliest Government measures to be introduced.

The present Government was placed in power with a definite understanding that there would be carried out the announced policy of the taking of a public vote to be followed by the enactment of effective prohibitory legislation, if the vote showed public opinion in favor of such a measure.

The action of Parliament will be awaited with intense interest. On the details of the plebiscite bill much will depend, but there is no reason to believe that there will be anything else than an honorable and speedy fulfillment of the Government pledge. The passing of the Plebiscite Act will be the inauguration of a tremendous struggle, for which it behoves us to be fully prepared.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION.

By the time this paper is in the hands of its many readers in the Province of Ontario, the Provincial Legislative Assembly will have commenced its annual session. The outline of proposed legislation will be before the public. We have definite assurance that an important feature of these proposals will be additional restrictions to be imposed upon the licensed liquor traffic.

There is here an opportunity for the present Government to confer incalculable benefits upon the community. Public sentiment is far ahead of existing legislation. We have the definite promise of the Government that legislation will be promoted as fast and as far as public opinion will sustain it.

If this pledge is carried out we ought to have a great reduction in the number of licenses permitted. The request made by the convention held in July is certainly a moderate one. One license to 1,500 of the population could not reasonably be looked upon by any one as an extreme measure of restriction.

No objection of any force can be urged to the proposal that an early hour should be fixed at which all bars-rooms must be closed. The seven o'clock law for Saturday night meets with universal approval. The same provision for every night in the week would be a boon, and would, we are confident, be warmly welcomed by a vast majority of our citizens.

The growing evil of club distribution of liquor is a peril to-day recognized everywhere. It is hardly possible to enact legislation against this evil that would be so drastic as to be more than public opinion would sustain.

Other Provinces give voters the right to get rid of existing licenses. Excepting British Columbia, Ontario is farthest behind in this important respect. The request that the people in a locality should not be forced to submit to the continuity of an obnoxious license is eminently fair, and ought to meet with a cordial and prompt response.

Friends of the temperance cause in every part of Ontario, are respectfully requested to carefully watch the progress of events during the coming session. They ought to do all in their power to strengthen the hands of those who are seeking to impress the Government with the importance of, and the necessity for all the restrictions asked for, especially those above set out.

Members of the Legislature ought to be made aware of the strength of public opinion in favor of these solely needed restrictions. They ought to be made aware of the strength of the temperance sentiment of their respective constituencies. Important aid will be given to our cause by every friend of that cause who respectfully, wisely and determinedly presses upon his representative the wisdom of our demand.

THE PLEBISCITE.

A great mistake will be made by any prohibitionists who take time at the present crisis to discuss the coming plebiscite from the standpoint of party politics. Whatever may have been its origin, it now affords us an opportunity to crush the legalized liquor traffic in Canada and for that result every effort should be made. In the Dominion Parliament a plebiscite was advocated by both Conservatives and Liberals. Hon. George E. Foster and Hon. David Mills have both been among its strongest advocates. It was however, before the last election, made a part of the declared policy of the Liberal Party, so that when the present Government took office, it was with the definite pledge that a vote of the people would be taken on the question of total national prohibition.

The government is not only committed to the taking of a vote, but by the definite declaration of the First Minister, is committed to the promotion of legislation giving effect to the will of the people as declared at the polls. There is no uncertainty regarding this matter. Such a victory as we expect to win for the cause of prohibition means nothing short of legislation for the total suppression of the traffic in intoxicating beverages.

The liquor traffic recognizes this. Already there is sore anxiety in the ranks of our opponents. They are making preparations for a desperate fight. It will be a struggle in which the existence of the liquor business will be at stake. The outcome will either be a death-blow to the traffic or a further lease to it of life and power.

This is the crucial year. On every Christian woman and man a heavy responsibility rests. Everyone has a duty in relation to the contest in which everyone ought to have a share. Our full strength cannot be exerted unless we act unitedly. We must forget all differences and divisions and go into the contest as one man. The discussion of dead issues is worse than a waste of time. It is a dissipation of power.

In these facts we have the highest kind of incentives to earnest, deter-

mined, judicious work. We must let no prejudice or sectionalism interfere with the responsible duty that we have on hand. We must sink out of sight minor differences. We must completely abandon the discussion of side issues and unimportant details. TOTAL NATIONAL PROHIBITION is the question to be presented, argued and advocated. Matters regarding which we have differences of opinion, may well lie in abeyance, while we concentrate our energies on winning a splendid triumph out of this providential opportunity.

For the sake of thousands of sin-cursed homes, for the salvation of thousands of imperilled souls and bodies, for the emancipation and elevation of our country and our people, let us go forward in the strength of God with this single inquiry. "What can I personally do to help in this serious crisis?" Let the inquiry be accompanied with decision to fearlessly obey the answer that judgment and conscience dictate. If we face the issue in the right spirit with the right determination, we are absolutely certain to win.

GREAT CONVENTIONS.

During 1897 there will be held many important gatherings and imposing demonstrations. Canada will be celebrating the 400th anniversary of its discovery by voyagers from the eastern world. The whole British Empire will be declaring its joy in the attainment by our beloved Queen of the completion of the 60th year of her beneficent reign. The City of Toronto will be the scene of many important gatherings, representative of world-wide movements in scientific, social and religious progress.

None of these great assemblages will be fraught with more weighty import, or productive of more far-reaching results than the national and provincial gatherings of prohibitionists to be held in July.

A Provincial Convention will be opened on July 13th, made up of representatives of church congregations, young people's societies, temperance organizations and similar bodies from every part of Ontario. It will doubtless be the largest ever convened in Canada. On the following day the Council of the Dominion Alliance will assemble. It is expected to include representatives from every province, chosen delegates from every provincial temperance organization, and a great number of ecclesiastical bodies. Already many delegates have been selected, and plans are being made for their reception and entertainment at this important interprovincial gathering.

The work of both these conventions will relate to the coming plebiscite. The Dominion Council will suggest plans and methods for the campaign, carefully considering the necessities of the different localities and wisely studying means for unifying and economizing the many temperance agencies available in the different provinces on which the brunt of the battle must fall. The provincial gathering will take hold of offered suggestions and consider details of the lines on which the fight in Ontario will be carried on.

We call attention to these meetings early in the year in order that our friends in every part of the country may have the dates named in mind, and lay their plans to give as much personal assistance as possible in the deliberations of these important gatherings, and be prepared to loyally carry out the policy that may be agreed upon by our assembled representatives.

AN ENGLISH CONVENTION.

The good example set by Canadian prohibitionists, in the wise method of bringing together from time to time representative prohibitionists to consult regarding the best methods of carrying on the prohibition movement is bearing fruit in other places. A "National Convention on the Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic" for the United Kingdom will be held in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, from April 3rd to April 9th, 1897.

This great gathering will be of a thoroughly representative character. National, provincial and denominational organizations, county, district or town associations, and local societies and congregations will have proportionate representation in the convention. Sir Wilfred Lawson, Bart, M.P., the great leader of the temperance forces in the British Islands, will, as is fitting, preside.

The convention will be divided into seven sections, dealing with different phases of the prohibition and liquor problems. Programmes are already published giving the names of a great array of social reformers who will present, in brief papers, the subjects to be discussed. The Executive Committee charged with the details of arrangements for the meeting is representative of every phase of organized temperance and prohibitory effort.

We cannot afford space to record the many names that are published in these connections. The following is a list of the titles of the divisions under which the many themes presented will be classified: 1. Historical and Legislative. 2. Prohibition in other Lands. 3. Hindrance and Statistical. 4. Economic to Prohibition. 5. Industrial and Commercial. 6. The Church and Prohibition. 7. Prohibition Organization. 8. Woman's help for Prohibition.

WHAT THE PRIESTS SAY.

What is it that keeps the Irish people in these low social conditions? The saloon. Thither goes the money earned by the sweat of their brows. Thence do men issue, broken down in health and strength, to swell the list of idlers and paupers. Our disgrace and our misfortunes is the number of Irish saloon-keepers.—*Archbishop Ireland.*

I impeach the liquor traffic of high crimes and misdemeanors. . . It is mere mockery to ask us to put down drunkenness by moral and religious means.—*Cardinal Manning.*

The saloon is the recruiting office of the devil, of blasphemy and of infidelity. It is the duty, therefore, of all who love God and the Church to oppose the influence of the saloon.—*Father Burns.*

We know that intemperance has wrought evil in the liberties of our country, and in the politics of our country. Oh, the meanness of our politics, that will be led by the grog-selling element!—*Father Elliott.*

We who labor so hard to rid our mother country of landlords and landlord iniquity ought not to become slaves of the rum lord and bow to the iniquity of intemperance.—*Father Conaty.*

Let no man say that he is safe enough that he has no occasion to take the pledge. I have seen the stars of heaven fall and the cedars of Lebanon laid low. The pledge which I ask you and others to take does not enslave—it makes free. Temperance brings blessings in both hands—blessings for time and blessings for eternity.—*Father Mathew.*

We do not believe that the Church should leave the field entirely alone to the saloon-keeper to champion our laws. We believe that as long as the saloon dares, with brazen effrontery, to demoralize our politics that the Church, with uprightness, with a clear and serene countenance should enter the political arena to purify it.—*Father Cleary.*