

## 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, MARCH, 1902

### THE GREAT CONVENTION

The rally of prohibitionists at the Horticultural Pavilion in Toronto on Feb. 25th, was an epoch-making gathering. It was without exception the largest convention of prohibitionists ever held in Canada, representing every section of the Province and every class of the community. There were more than 1,200 delegates on hand, and fully 1,000 of them were men who will have votes in the coming Provincial election.

All through the day enthusiasm was high, yet discussion had in it nothing of personality and was full of force and determination. The delegates were practically unanimous in their condemnation of the unfair conditions attached to the proposed referendum, the main difference of opinion being as to whether or not direct condemnation should be made to the referendum proposal altogether.

The deliverances of the convention will be found in another column under the heading, "Declarations of the Prohibition Convention." They were adopted with slight verbal alterations from the form in which they were submitted as a report of the executive committee. The discussion referred to, took place upon an amendment to the third declaration offered by Rev. Dr. Chown, who wished to substitute for the committee's clause the following statement:—

"Whereas two plebiscite votes have been taken upon the question of prohibition, in which the principle has been adopted by overwhelming majorities, and whereas Sir Oliver Mowat and the Hon. G. W. Ross each expressed the conviction that the vote of 1894 indicated that the people were sufficiently educated upon this question, and whereas the Government has promised to introduce legislation to the extent of its powers, this pledge being reiterated by Hon. G. W. Ross last February, and

"Whereas the prohibition bill recently introduced by the Government provides for a referendum vote to give effect to said bill; looking upon the proposal for the so-called referendum as an evasion of the responsibility that belongs to the Government and the Legislature, and which cannot be regarded as other than a violation of a solemn promise of Government;

"Therefore, the convention enters its emphatic protest against such an evasion of responsibility and breach of faith, and calls upon the Legislature to amend the bill by

striking out the provisions for a referendum."

This resolution was seconded by Rev. W. Kettwell and was taken as expressing the views of that section of the convention which believed that the cause would be best served by denouncing not only the manifestly unfair features of the referendum bill, but the taking of any further vote of the electors on the question of prohibition.

It will be noticed that the declarations adopted do not either condemn or approve the referendum as a method. It is fair, however, to state that the strong opinion of the convention seemed to be that any more voting by the people was unnecessary and that the Government ought to have dealt with the situation by the introduction of a bill to be made law by the simple, ordinary action of the Legislature.

It was felt, however, that while a referendum was not necessary, that the temperance party had not a strong case for objecting to the ratification of proposed legislation by a fair vote and that the wisest position to take was simply that of opposition to the unjust features of the bill as it had been introduced into the Legislature.

The meeting was presided over by Rev. W. A. MacKay, D. D., president of the Ontario Branch of the Alliance. Rev. L. W. Hill and Mr. J. T. Shanks acted as secretaries. After the vote on Dr. Chown's proposed amendment the executive's declarations were unanimously adopted. A deputation was appointed to lay the findings of the convention before the Government.

### THE DEPUTATION.

On February 26th the Government received the deputation appointed by the prohibition convention of the preceding day. Although only a few representatives were chosen to convey the message of the convention, a large crowd of interested delegates were in attendance.

The deputation was introduced by Rev. Dr. MacKay. The views of the convention were voiced by Mr. A. B. Spencer, Mr. C. J. Miller, Mrs. May R. Thornley, and Rev. Dr. Carman. The speakers expressed the readiness of temperance workers to meet the liquor traffic advocates in a fair fight, but protested very strongly against the injustice of their opponents being allowed to win without securing a majority of the votes polled. Objection was also made to the 14th of October as the day for voting, and the Government was urged to give all classes better voting opportunities and safer conditions by having the voting at the time of the municipal elections for 1903.

In reply, the Premier argued that such a bill as the prohibition bill proposed ought to have the sanction of a conclusive majority of the electorate. He did not think it unjust to require prohibitionists to poll a majority of the votes cast in the election of 1898, and he stated that he could hold out no hope that prohibition would be secured by a simple majority of the votes cast. He was favorable to a change of the voting time to a later date, but was not prepared to say what date would be chosen, and he promised on behalf of the Government a thorough enforcement of the prohibitory law if it should come into operation.

### ACTION OF THE LEGISLATURE

On Wednesday, March 5th, Hon. G. W. Ross moved the second reading of the prohibition bill, which is to be

entitled "The Liquor Act, 1902." He spoke at some length on the question of whether or not the measure was constitutional and discussed also the matters of majority required and date of voting. The changes proposed from the form in which the bill was first submitted merely altered the voting day from October 14th to a day in November, not yet announced, and changed the majority required to secure prohibition to a majority of the votes cast, providing such majority is also a majority of the number of electors who voted at the general Provincial election in 1898.

Mr. J. P. Whitney, leader of the Opposition, opposed the bill. He denounced the referendum proposal and the unfair conditions attached to it. He also declared himself "opposed to the bill on the merits of it without reference to the referendum," and advocated as an alternative policy legislation decreasing the number of licenses, maintaining present restrictions, removing commissioners and inspectors from party influence, and a thorough enforcement of the law.

Hon. J. M. Gibson advocated the referendum as a constitutional method, quoting many authorities in favor of his contention, and commending the conditions attached to the bill.

Mr. G. F. Marter favored the bill as a useful measure of legislation, but did not think there was any necessity for a referendum to bring it into operation. He forcibly attacked the unjust condition of the measure which he proposed to endeavor to remove, but would support the Government in endeavoring to bring the bill into operation.

Speeches were also made by Hon. E. J. Davis, Mr. J. J. Foy, Mr. Geo. P. Graham, Mr. W. H. Hoyle, Mr. F. F. Pardee, Mr. Thomas Crawford, and Mr. I. B. Lucas.

The second reading was carried by a majority of thirteen, all the Liberals present and Mr. Marter voting for the measure, and all the Conservatives, excepting Mr. Marter, voting against it.

### A BAD LAW.

The opponents of prohibition are busily engaged in not merely striving to discredit prohibition in general, and the Manitoba Liquor Act in particular, but are loud in their praises of the many excellences of the present Ontario Liquor License Law, which they hold up as a model piece of legislation. This line of argument is also followed by many Liberal politicians, who seek by it to represent the Reform Party as being entitled to credit for useful temperance legislation.

There are many valuable restrictive provisions in the Ontario License Law. It is a vastly better measure than the law that was in force in this Province thirty years ago. To-day it is, however, antiquated, defective and from a temperance standpoint lacking in some detail as compared with the liquor law of any other Province.

For many years this law has been condemned by successive conventions of temperance workers, and the Government has been persistently appealed to for needed improvements and better enforcement. It is no secret that the Government has realized and admitted its defects, and had promised a revision of it before the present crisis was precipitated by the Privy Council's decision in favor of the Manitoba Prohibitory Law.

Every temperance worker who has made any honest attempt to secure an enforcement of the provisions of the Ontario License Law knows that this law is weak, imperfect and out-of-date, and that in many parts of the Province its enforcement has been in the hands of officials who have used its technical defects to thwart the efforts of those who have striven to make it an effective measure for the restriction of the liquor traffic.

It is true that some of our experienced workers, who know what the license law really is, stated the facts regarding a measure that for many years has been far behind what the temperance sentiment of the country demands.

## IMPORTANT.

TORONTO, 1902.

DEAR FRIEND,—

You are respectfully requested to carefully examine **The Camp Fire**, a neat four-page monthly Prohibition paper, full of bright, pointed, convenient facts and arguments; containing also a valuable summary of the latest news about our cause. It is just what is needed to **inspire workers and make votes**.

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