

THE CAMPAIGN MANUAL

THE SITUATION IN ONTARIO

A good many friends of the temperance cause in different parts of the Dominion, and in other countries, are at present watching with much interest the battle that is being waged in the Province of Ontario. Some of them are desirous of obtaining exact information as to the origin, nature of the present contest, and the following facts are set out for their information :

The respective powers of the Dominion Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures in the matter of liquor legislation is not clearly defined by statute. It has been generally conceded that the Dominion Parliament has power to enact prohibitory legislation. Under this power Parliament passed the Canada Temperance Act, providing for prohibition by popular vote in cities and counties. It has also been generally conceded that provinces have full power to license and regulate the liquor traffic within their own territorial limits. Regulation or limitation implies a measure of prohibition. How far a province has authority to go in this direction has been the principal point in dispute.

Because of the uncertainty of this power the Ontario Legislature, a number of years ago, declined to pass a general provincial prohibition law, but memorialized the Dominion Parliament to enact such a law for the Dominion. The Ontario Legislature, however, enacted a law empowering municipalities to pass by-laws prohibiting the retail sale of liquor within their own limits.

In 1893 many petitions were received by the Ontario Legislature asking for the taking of a vote of the electors upon the question of prohibition. At the same time Mr. G. F. Marter, M.P.P., introduced into the Legislature a Bill to prohibit the retail sale of intoxicating liquors throughout the Province. The Government opposed the Bill on the ground of uncertainty as to the Legislature's power to pass such a law, and proposed that an effort should be made to ascertain the exact extent of the Legislature's jurisdiction by submitting the question to the courts of law.

The Legislature approved the Government plan, and passed an Act providing for the taking of a ballot vote of the electors on the question : " Are you in favor of the immediate prohibition by law of the importation, manufacture, and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage ? " This vote was taken on January 4th, 1894, when the municipal elections were being held, and resulted as follows :

	Men.	Women.	Total.
Votes " Yes "	180,087	12,402	192,489
Votes " No "	108,494	2,226	110,720

Shortly after the taking of this vote a great convention of prohibition workers, held in the city of Toronto, appointed a deputation to wait upon the Ontario Government, and " respectfully request them to declare in favor of the total prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating liquor to the full extent of the power vested in the Legislature."

The deputation from the convention was received by the then Premier and