

The Canada Citizen

AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

A Journal devoted to the advocacy of Prohibition, and the promotion of social progress and moral Reform.

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HIGH LICENSE.

In many parts of the United States an agitation is at present being carried on, having for its object the raising, to a very high figure, of the fee for a license to sell intoxicating liquor. It is urged by the advocates of this movement, that a high fee for license will greatly diminish the number of saloons, and that this diminution will be a gain for the temperance cause. The question is receiving some attention here and has already been discussed to some extent by S—, Mr. James Thomson and H. K.—M. in the correspondence columns of THE CANADA CITIZEN.

Our position in regard to all such movements is well known to our friends. We are utterly opposed to any toleration of the liquor traffic, because we believe that, in the present state of society, total prohibition, thoroughly enforced, is the only effective remedy for intemperance; and that prohibition is the only policy that any legislative authority ought to pursue in reference to such a deadly evil. Pending the attainment, however, of this state of society and law, we are willing to aid any hopeful, reasonable and right effort for the limitation of the iniquitous traffic. If High License is the best plan for securing this limitation, we will advocate high license, but if any such movement is to receive the support of temperance women and men it must establish its claim to their support by demonstrating its "rightness and fitness,"—its inherent soundness of principle, and its record or prospect of success. Is it right? Will it do good?

Mr. Thomson favors high license because, (1) it "will lessen the number of drinkshops" and (2) it "will weaken our opposing forces" by driving into other spheres of operation much of the capital that is now invested in the liquor business. Both of these results, if attained, would be steps of progress, provided they (1) advanced us nearer to total prohibition, and (2) placed us in as good a position as we now are in, for still further progress. It is in the latter particular that we fear the weakness of the new scheme lies.

The admitted stronghold of the drink traffic to-day is its financial relation to our governmental system. It yields a revenue

and is therefore tolerated. To increase that revenue would be to tighten the grip that this terrible evil now has upon the throat of our political institutions. To make the proposed restriction effective the fee would have to be made so high as to make the revenue from the few greater than it now is from the many.

Another great danger, perhaps in this case we should a position evil—that high license would induce, must not be overlooked. Liquor-selling would be put entirely in the hands of men of means, men who could afford to make their places attractive and seductive in the highest degree, and who would be driven to do this by the expensiveness of their larger license-fee investment. At present our saloons are too attractive by far. There are parents prayerfully and anxiously endeavoring to train their boys in virtue and sobriety. To this end they are doing all in their power (sometimes at sore though willing self-sacrifice) to make home as bright and attractive as they can. They have a terrible rival in the gorgeous and luxurious saloon. Can we afford to legislate in the direction of increasing the awful advantage that in this respect these dens of sin already have, in their rivalry with the purifying, hallowing and ennobling influences of home.

Our correspondent S. has called attention to the fact, that the new remedy for intemperance would be a bar to further progress by giving additional plausibility to the often urged sophism of "a vested right" in a license, as well as by giving the whole system an expectation of permanence by an extended lease upon new conditions. Advanced temperance men denounce all legal sanction as unholy, and believe it wrong that a government should derive a revenue from such a source. S. pertinently asks:—"Would the crime of the arch-traitor have been less to be deprecated if the price of his villainy had been thirty thousand pieces of silver, instead of only thirty?"

H. K.—M clearly brings out the point that places tolerated under high license would do exactly the same kind of mischief that is done now. He says, "you cannot make an unhealthy house less unhealthy by increasing the rent." He also protests against the injustice of High License, while it tolerates an infamous business, placing that business exclusively in the hands of the richer men. If the traffic is confined to a few, provisions should not be made, admitting only capitalists to the monopoly-holding circle.

We would ask attention to this question. If the object of high license is to limit the number of saloons, why adopt a plan that must be uncertain? If the fee be ever so high, there may be a large number of men who will take out a license, if the number is simply limited by law, that number cannot be exceeded, and the desired result is attained with certainty, and without the evils that it has been shown accompany high license in particular. Moreover, numerical limitation by law would be straightforward, the law would do what it intended, and say exactly what it meant.

It is worthy of note that the large majority, the more successful and more zealous of the temperance and prohibition party in the United States, is almost invariably strongly opposed to the High License movement.

WIFE BEATING.

It is almost impossible to believe the statement, it is a disgrace to the country and the day in which we live, that the sanction of law should be given to one of the foulest and meanest crimes that a brute in human form could commit. A defenceless woman in a delicate condition, is beaten black and blue, locked out of her