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F. S. SPENCE,

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MARCH 2ND, 1906.

HIGH LICENSE AGAIN.

We publish another letter this week from Mr. James Thomson in reference to the subject of High License. Our good friend, however, is away out again. We know Mr. Thomson is an earnest advocate of temperance, but he is not a good authority on matters of detail in reference to the liquor traffic. No license in Toronto for the sale of liquor costs more than \$350, excepting our few special licenses—ten in number—that apply to places exempt from the requirements of furnishing hotel accommodation. These ten pay only \$100 each. Our ordinary bar-room pays \$350. The highest license paid is \$100. Mr. T is not posted in reference to either Toronto or Detroit

Our friend argues that the history of our province, and city, has been a history of "increasing restriction of the liquor traffic," "lessening of the number of saloons," "respectabilizing of the saloons," a steady "increase in the license fee," and diminishing of the "influence and power of the liquor traffic." Granting all these facts, there still remain these other facts that the increase of the license fee has not been the cause of the lessening of the number, and the respectabilizing of the saloons has not been the cause of the decline of the influence and power of the liquor-traffic. The greatest number of licenses that could be granted in the city of Toronto is 150. Far more than that number are applied for every year, and would be taken out notwithstanding the large license fee, if the law allowed them to be issued. If our license fee were cut down to five dollars—our numerical restriction remaining as it is—there would not be one license issued more than we have at present

Mr. Thomson knows as well as any one that the amount of the license fee in Toronto has nothing whatever to do with the number of licenses taken out. A mistake frequently made in argument is the imagining that coincidences have the relationship of cause and effect. We grant that "restriction accompanied by high license has done us good service" Let it be borne in mind, however, that the restriction has done all the good service, and the high license has had no more to do in the production of beneficial results than it has had in the restriction. No argument is needed to convince any person of ordinary intelligence that an attractive and luxurious saloon is more dangerous and debauching than a low and disreputable dive. We do not think it is disputed that, under high license, saloons are more respectable than they are under either low license or prohibition. Our good friend, Mr. Thomson, is a prohibitionist. We believe in prohibition. Mr. Thomson believes in restriction because it is a step towards—and a measure of—prohibition. We believe in it for the same reason. Mr. Thomson thinks that high license would be restrictive. The facts show that in Canada at any rate we can get large measures of restriction without getting them in any sense

through high license. The restriction in itself is good—the high license in itself is bad. Let us refuse the evil and choose the good.

Another of our esteemed correspondents, Mr. William Houston, clearly states the whole case in the closing paragraphs of his letter, in which he says that any person desiring to sell liquor is prohibited "if the population limit has been reached before he asks to be excepted" from the general law of prohibition. That is the case with all who have been refused licenses in the city of Toronto. Mr. Houston, however, favors high license as "the alternative of the Scott Act." He promises us his reasons further on, and we shall be pleased to hear them and accept them if they are sound. But meantime we must, as a matter of conscience and judgment, advocate the restriction that we know to be good and oppose the high license which we know to be bad.

THE DUNDAS INSPECTOR.

We publish elsewhere in this paper some correspondence in reference to the charge made two weeks ago, in a letter signed "Elector," against Mr. Beach, the Inspector for Dundas. We do not know, personally, anything of this matter, beyond what are stated in the correspondence published and the official returns which, as pointed out by Mr. Manning, certainly do not bear out the assertion that Mr. Beach is now less energetic than he was at any former time. We only desire to do justice to all, and are pleased to have the facts of the case placed before our readers.

THE ONTARIO ALLIANCE.

We desire to call special attention to the announcement made elsewhere in this paper of the annual meeting of the Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance. This meeting promises to be one of unusual importance and interest. Ten years have passed since the Scott Act was enacted by the Parliament of Canada. It is now in operation in the greater part of the Province of Ontario. We know its good points—we know its defects. We have had experience in the practical working of prohibition, and we are in a better position than we ever were before to consider the great problem of how most effectually to suppress the unholy traffic in strong drink.

Our Dominion's magnificent record of ninety-five Scott Act contests, in seventy-three of which we have been victorious, polling an aggregate of more than 50,000 votes for prohibition, is full of encouragement. The Scott Act has never been repealed, and to day is stronger than ever in the confidence of the Canadian public. We will meet on the 20th to review the ground gone over, to survey the position in which we stand, and to plan for still further, more aggressive, and more effective work.

Notwithstanding the magnificent successes which it has achieved, and the favor with which it has been received, the Scott Act is after all a defective instrument for the accomplishment of the results we desire. It must soon give place to more general and more potential legislation. Until that time comes it is our duty, however, to stand by what we have already gained, to make our law as perfect as it can be made, to secure in its details such amendments as are necessary, and to secure in its enforcement such methods as are needful to give us the maximum of benefit with the minimum of still permitted evil. To the Dominion Parliament we must apply for additional legislation. To the Ontario government we must look for a continuance of its wise and effective policy of enforcement.

Our Provincial government is endeavoring to have the law enforced. Here and there derelict inspectors are defying public opinion and disobeying the instructions they have received from the Provincial Secretary's office. The coming convention will give our friends an opportunity to compare

notes, to talk over the merits and demerits of different officers, to consult and plan for co-operation with those who are doing right, and agitation for the removal of those who are doing wrong.

Our province is in the heat of an other campaign. Halton voted yesterday on the question of repeal, and probably next month will see contests in five other counties. We must not yield an inch of the ground for which we have fought so hard. Our friends must stand to the fir guns, and this convention will be a good place in which to gather new inspiration and consult and plan for the approaching struggle.

The time for the convention has been so fixed that it will be held while the Local Legislature is in session, it being hoped that thereby the Alliance meeting may have some assistance from members of the Legislative Assembly, and that the Legislative Assembly may have a great deal of assistance from the meeting of the Alliance. Let our friends come out in force.

Editorial Notes.

The ninth annual meeting of the Council of the Dominion Alliance will be held in the City Hall at Ottawa on Tuesday next, March 6, commencing at 9 a.m. It is earnestly hoped that there will be present a full representation of delegates from different provinces

The official records issued by the Ontario Provincial Government show that in Scott Act counties during the past year there was a startling reduction in crime as a whole, as well as in the particular offence of drunkenness

The Halton contest is now ended and the campaign is on for Renfrew, Simcoe, Dufferin, Bruce, and Dundas, Stormont and Glengarry. In all of these counties vigorous efforts have been made by the Antis to break down the law and make it unworkable. But, in all of them good has been accomplished, and we believe the Scott Act will be sustained by good majorities

Nothing will help our friends in the Scott Act counties more than persistent, effective circulation of good, sound literature. Will our friends do all they can to help us to spread the CANADA CITIZEN in these localities. Read the first column on page four of this paper

We sometimes receive letters from friends to this effect "Please send CANADA CITIZEN for one year to Mr. A. B., and charge to me." Such a request is not easily complied with. It involves opening an account in our books for the party who proposes to pay for his friend's subscription and gives us a good deal of unnecessary trouble. We will be pleased to receive such requests provided cash accompanies them, but will be thankful if our friends will kindly save us the trouble of dealing with such matters in any other way.

Rescue the Perishing, or a Plea for Prohibition.

SHALL I, or shall I not. This seemed to be the problem that concerned the enfeebled mind of a respectably dressed middle-aged man as he halted in front of an enticing saloon, whose red lights were streaming out into the dark surroundings. A CANADA CITIZEN, agent homeward bound (with his eyes open) saw it and seizing the opportunity, approached him and gently said, "Don't go in, brother, don't go in." "Thank you, sir, I will not," was the reply. As they went onward the following facts were elicited: "I am out of employment through this drink, and this is not the only situation I have lost. I am at the present parted from my family. Would God these places of temptation were swept out of existence, and, sir, I will with God's help try to follow your advice, thank you, sir, thank you."

THE NEWAGE TRIBUNE, published in Michigan, gives a good deal of space to a discussion, by Rev. W. Burgess, of the working of Local Option in Canada.

Correspondence.

High License.

Editor Canada Citizen:

SIR,—I freely confess that by a momentary confusion of places, I mis stated the cost of a retail spirit and malt license in Detroit. It appears that the cost of such license in Detroit is \$500. In Toronto the saloon license costs \$450, a difference of \$50, not \$150 as you state. In discussing this subject let it be understood that by the term saloon is meant a place where spirituous and malt liquors are sold retail by the glass. To your six propositions which work in a circle and preach a doctrine of gloomy despair, I oppose the history of our own province and of our own City of Toronto during the last twenty, and especially during the last twelve years, for the reason that we are all more or less conversant with that history.

An ounce of experience is worth a pound of suppositions. I affirm then that the history of our province and city during the period named, has been a history of ever increasing restriction of the liquor traffic and a lessening of the number of saloons. That the respectabilizing of the saloons has kept equal pace with the lessening of their number and the increased restrictions placed upon them; that each step of that careful legislation which placed greater restrictions upon the saloon and lessened their number, was accompanied by an increase in the license fee, and in the penalties for violation of the law. I also affirm that step by step with this restriction and lessening of the saloons and the imposition of a higher license, the influence and power of the liquor traffic has steadily declined, and the temperance principles and sentiment have correspondingly grown in power and volume. I think these facts will be accepted by all who have any knowledge of the case, as beyond dispute. We are very far from being satisfied with the extent to which the law has gone in restricting and lessening, and, if you will, in respectabilizing the saloons (which in its true meaning is an impossibility) as witness the deputations to the Government from the "Law and Order League," praying for further amendments to the Crooks Act. But with all our imperfections, I would ask you to name a city of equal population on this continent, under Prohibition, where drunkenness and the crimes resulting therefrom, are less than with us. In return I will give you the name of a place where high license was substituted for prohibition, with the immediate result of very largely reducing the number of places where liquor was sold. We are one in our desire "to arrive at the best and most permanent results by the quickest and safest route." So far restriction accompanied by a higher license has done us good service. If restriction without an increase in the fee would be better, and could be obtained, I would be glad to have it, but apparently, in the minds of our rulers, the two are inseparably linked together. Whenever Prohibition or the Scott Act can be carried with a good majority vote, and the law is such as to secure its enforcement, then I say God speed the day of its advent. But for many reasons I would prefer a strict license law well enforced, to a professedly prohibition measure set at defiance until it becomes the laughing stock of the liquor interest, and a hanging of the head for very shame, to all who have any regard for law and order. Give me the machine that does the work, you may call it what you may.

Prohibition and License.

Editor Canada Citizen:—

SIR,—Before giving my views as to the amendments that should be made in the Crooks Act, in accordance with the purpose expressed in my letter in the CITIZEN of Jan 13th, permit me to dwell a little further on the necessity of keeping clearly in mind that all license laws are prohibitory in their real nature.

What is called the common law right to buy and sell anything that may be made an article of merchandise, is, under our political system, the privilege of every citizen. To this principle liquor containing alcohol are no exception, and the same is true of poisons, and of other things on the sale of which restrictions have for one reason or another been placed. But for laws made to restrain this common law liberty of traffic, the sale and purchase of alcoholic liquors would be as free and unrestricted as the sale and purchase of flour or of sugar.

There are other common law rights which have been similarly curtailed. One of these is the right to issue promissory notes payable on demand and to put them into circulation. Many people—probably