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THE FARMERSVILLE REPOPTER.

THE SCOTT ACT.

We approach this subject with a feeling of diffidence mingled with reluctance. We are painfully sensible of our inability to do justice to a question so important, so all-absorbing and so tremendous in its results. We know that the most obtruse problems of political economy and civil jurisprudence are involved in its solution, but yet, impelled by a sense of duty and a love of fair play, we shall attempt to place before our readers a few of the inconsistencies embodied in the arguments brought forward by the opponents of the Scott Act, and having done so, to give reasons why that act should receive the unqualified support of the whole community.

In "Reasons Why Farmers Should Vote Against the Act," the public is told that "farmers will suffer great pecuniary loss by the adoption of the act." The publication in question also promises to show that such is the case. We may fairly assume that all the reasons that can be given are those accompanying the statement quoted.

We have read this extraordinary sheet carefully, and all that is to be found in it in support of the above statement is that farmers will lose a trifle on barley and apples by the operation of the act. Was ever such unmitigated nonsense attempted to be pawned off on an intelligent public? Taking our opponents' figures, about thirteen million bushels of barley are produced in the Province of Ontario, nine millions of which go to the breweries of the United States, thus leaving only four millions to be consumed at home, and of this two and a half millions are used in the manufacture of beer. Now if the American brewers find it profitable to purchase yearly from Ontario nine million bushels of barley, with all the breweries here in full blast, would they not be able to purchase two and a half millions more without reducing the price, if the production of beer in Ontario ceased? Certainly they would.

But say our opponents, the Americans are working just as hard for prohibition as are the people of Ontario. Joyful intelligence! Heaven help them in the good cause! In the event of such a happy termination of the struggle, which it is earnestly hoped may be in the near future, should the time be near when the vast piles of brick, and stone, the clanking machinery and the sinewy laborer which have all lent their aid in manufacturing that which can only debase and demoralize man, shall be used for other and nobler purposes, there yet remains a means by which the farmer may dispose of his barley without pecuniary loss. He can feed it to his stock.

At once we are confronted by the startling announcement, "bright colored barley is worth ten cents a bushel more than dark." Even an animal as intelligent as a Jersey cow would not know the difference between bright and dark barley. This is amusing, but utterly senseless. If color is the only difference, then the difference in price is due to the liquor trade alone and would cease to exist with the closing up of the breweries. It is evident that a bushel of dark colored barley would sell for just as much as a bushel of bright colored were the cause of differ-

ence removed. Whether that price would be higher or lower than the present prices depends entirely upon the ratio between demand and supply. If the same quantity continued to be produced and the demand as great as formerly, assuming prohibition in force, clearly the average price would be unchanged. It then becomes necessary to seek for a market. The market we propose is, let the farmer give increased attention to stock-raising, and in doing so he will dispose of the greater part of his barley on the farm. The advantages derived from this system would be that home consumption would tend to keep up prices, while the manure produced would amply repay the farmer for the extra work incurred in the disposal of his grain. Indeed this last advantage, in our opinion, is of very great importance, for unless stock farming is engaged in more extensively than hitherto, the farming lands must inevitably become unperished. From this it appears that the operation of the Scott Act encourages to a certain extent, better methods of farming than are practised at the present time. The conclusion at which we have arrived at is that the farmers cannot possibly suffer loss by the adoption of the act, and that the arguments in support of supposed loss to be sustained, are mere ropes of sand that fall to pieces as soon as touched.

The remarks on the "cider question" require to be noticed only that they may be despised. No farmer is likely to find fault with the act because it may possibly reduce the net receipts of a few bushels of unsalable apples by two or three cents a bushel.

We are next told that "prohibition for the Dominion of Canada means a loss of revenue of about six million of dollars a year." Assuming that this loss was made good by direct taxation, which need not necessarily be resorted to, the *per capita* tax would be about \$1.50. The levying of such a tax is exclaimed against by the opponents of the act as a great injustice. But where is the family that would not willingly give \$5 or \$10 a year if by so doing they could remove from our fair land this terrible scourge? Waiving the sentimental side of this question, however, and appealing only to the pockets of the people, allow us to ask from what source does this six million dollars of revenue come? We answer, from the people, and we defy successful contradiction. What matters it whether the wholesale liquor merchant, the hotel keeper or the brewer pays the money directly to the government, the money *does* come and *must* come from the drinkers, from those who give their bodies to be burned in the flames of alcohol, and at the same time bring degradation and ruin upon those nearest and dearest to them. Any hotel keeper will admit—excepting perhaps, a few of the first-class houses in our cities and largest towns—that were it not for the bar the house would not pay running expenses. In other words the "bar-tender" is industriously taking in *at all times* and in divers manners, money to oil the wheels of the government machine, but for every time he drops a dime into the revenue till, he slips a dollar into his own pocket. This is the nineteenth century of the Christian era,

and yet we find men advocating such methods of raising the revenue of one of the most intelligent governments of the world. Can such things be and overcome us like a summer's cloud without our special wonder?

But there is yet another standpoint from which this part of our subject may be viewed. The working power of any people measures the wealth of the nation. The power to do work varies directly as the *will* and the *intelligence*. The *will to do* is increased by a noble example, an exalted ideal and above all by the spontaneous outpourings of a joyous people. The sons and daughters of Ontario have both *will* and *intelligence*. They are pre-eminently intelligent and their *will power* is perhaps second to none. The use of alcoholic beverages it is well known, impairs both the *will* and *intelligence*. In order therefore that the capability to work may be used to the greatest advantage it is necessary that the people be strictly temperate, and the strict observance of the Scott Act would, we believe, assist materially, in banishing intemperance from our land.

To all this it may be added that intemperance is a fruitful source of crime. The testimony of judge and jury in all countries supports this statement. The adoption of the Act would therefore lessen crime and consequently decrease the amount of public money spent in administering the law. Thus we see that the increased working power of the people added to the decreased judicial expenditure would far exceed the direct taxation levied to meet the deficit in revenue, caused by a prohibitory liquor law.

Again we are told that the Act will not help the cause of temperance.

We believe that it will. As far as we can learn it is doing good work in the County of Halton at the present time. The opposition brought to bear against it is no doubt very great; the supporters of the act have many difficulties to contend with that would cease to exist were the Act in force in the surrounding counties.

We hold that it is not fair to estimate the good that can be done by it so long as its jurisdiction is surrounded by districts in which the sale of liquor is authorized by law. It is easily understood that under such conditions it is much easier to bring intoxicants into the county than it would be were the territory much larger. But even in this county with all its disadvantages the "groggery does not flourish on every corner," drunkenness is not more prevalent than it was before the adoption of the act, as is claimed by our opponents, but on the contrary, liquor can only be obtained at great trouble and expense, so that it is placed almost beyond the reach of those who would receive the greatest injury from it. This in itself is a most gratifying result and should give fresh encouragement and zeal to the workers in the temperance cause throughout the length and breadth of the Province.

We are next called upon to notice the "repeal of prohibition in Massachusetts." This we acknowledge to be a real difficulty. The testimony of men of undoubted honor and veracity

was that prohibition in that state *increased drunkenness*. On the strength of that testimony, the law was repealed by the state legislature and a stringent license law substituted for it. Now we desire to submit the following as an answer to those who argue that because prohibition failed in Massachusetts it will also fail in Ontario. It is much more difficult to enforce such a law in the former place than in the latter because the one is situated on the sea shore and the other is not. The great city of Boston is infested for at least nine months of the year, by a class of men that are confessedly more addicted to intemperance than any other, and this is not only true of the metropolis of the state, but applies in a greater or less extent to nearly all the other cities, especially those on the coast. From this evil the province of Ontario is in a great part free. In our opinion the superior intelligence of Ontario is also in her favor, and we say so with all due deference to the grand old Puritan state. From such considerations as those we would deem it very unfair to infer that the Scott Act must necessarily fail in Ontario because prohibition could not be enforced in Massachusetts.

The numbers arrested on charges of being drunk and disorderly during the years in which prohibition was in force, as well as under the license law are very unfairly commented upon. The number of arrests under prohibition is indeed somewhat greater than the number under license. But his fact evidently proves nothing, for he attempt to enforce the act would lead to an unusual number of arrests, and in addition to this the years under prohibition followed closely upon the American war, while those under license were farther removed from it. The years immediately after the war were signalized by lawless acts, such as the Fenian raids and many others of less notoriety. Thus vanish into thin air the arguments of the anti-Scott agitators.

But the scene is changed, and now we are told triumphantly, that Boston has increased in population during three years of license rule by 65,000. But have not other great cities increased just as much? They have, and the writers of anti-Scott articles should know it.

To sum up the justice and righteousness of our cause, no one for a moment will attempt to deny. The only question is, whether the act will promote temperance or not. We believe it will, but in order to answer the question satisfactorily, the act must have a trial, and we ask the public to give it that trial. And farmers, we solicit your interest and your vote, because, as has been shown, you will suffer no loss by its passage. But above all, because you are the bone and sinew of our country, and on you, therefore, the country relies for its physical and moral welfare. Help us, will you not? We trust, we feel confident, your answer is yes.

Foreigners own 21,000,000 acres in the United States.

France exports one million dollars worth of eggs annually.