

THE CAMP FIRE

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THE SITUATION AT OTTAWA.

The prohibition resolutions of which Mr. T. B. Flint has given notice, have not yet been discussed by the House of Commons. They will, however, in all probability, have had their turn before our readers have received this paper.

These resolutions propose that the Dominion Parliament shall enact a law of total prohibition, to come into operation in those provinces which approve the measure by a ballot vote, just as the Scott Act came into force in counties which adopted it.

Total prohibition, however, is something far ahead of the Scott Act. Prohibition for a province would be far ahead of prohibition for a county. The proposed legislation, if secured, will be a great deal better than anything yet tried in the way of prohibitory legislation.

It is expected that an attempt will be made to amend the resolutions by inserting a requirement that prohibition shall not come into operation in any province until approved by a majority of the voters on the lists for that province. This absurd and unjust suggestion, counting every dead, imprisoned, absent, indifferent, or in any way incapacitated voter as against a measure of so much importance, must be considered as a desperate effort of friends of the liquor traffic to thwart public opinion, and help the traffic to defy the people.

It is also expected that an amendment will be offered censuring the Government for not introducing a law of total prohibition and declaring in favor of such a measure. The Government ought to be censured for having paid so little regard to the clearly expressed will of the people. In view of the facts that the Government has absolutely refused to promote national prohibition, that the Party supporting that Government controls the House of Commons, and that the Province of Quebec has so overwhelmingly voted against prohibition, it is manifest that total, national prohibition is not likely to be immediately enacted.

It seems to us, therefore, that under the present circumstances the cause of prohibition will be best served by those Members of Parliament who unitedly support Mr. Flint's resolutions, which are certainly the smallest concession that Parliament can reasonably make to a very strong expression of public desire for effective legislation.

Prohibitionists outside Parliament will serve the cause by earnestly pressing this fact upon the attention of their representatives in the House of Commons.

THE ALLIANCE CONVENTIONS.

Consideration of the situation at Ottawa and the duty of prohibitionists in relation thereto, will be the principal business of the Dominion Alliance Conventions to be held next month.

The action of the Conventions will, of course, depend upon the action taken by Parliament upon the prohibition resolutions that have been presented in the House of Commons. If those resolutions are carried, then the Government, being instructed by Parliament to introduce a prohibitory law,

must either obey the instruction, or resign. If the resolutions are defeated, then Parliament will be in the position of having refused to make the smallest possible reasonable concession to the prohibition sentiment expressed so overwhelmingly in the Plebiscite of September last.

We can hardly believe that the Government will allow itself to be placed in such a position. The Liberal Party is, however, in a dilemma. Its leaders are manifestly unwilling to deal with the prohibition question. Yet they must do so, or face the opposition of those prohibitionists who are willing to put principle before party.

If Parliament enacts the legislation proposed, then we are in for another hot fight, a fight even more intense and practical than the last one. It will mean a fight in every Province in which victory by the prohibitionists will mean not a request for legislation, but the enactment of prohibition. Preparation for the contest will be the Conventions' work.

On the other hand, if Parliament fails us, then we have to deal with the fact that the Government which controls the House of Commons, is against the majority of the people who voted in the Plebiscite, and that majority will be in duty bound to fight the Government. In either case we are in for a fight. In either case the Conventions will be important. Responsibilities and duties of unusual character will be placed upon them. They will have work on hand requiring the best thought, coolest judgment and strongest determination that can be mustered. These Conventions will be no place for men who are not willing to sacrifice partisanship for principle, and stand for prohibition no matter whom it helps or hurts.

An earnest appeal is made to every sincere friend of moral reform to do his or her best to be personally present at these meetings, and to come prepared to do all that the existing conditions will make it necessary to do.

THE SCOTT ACT IN BROME.

The County of Brome, P.Q., is the constituency represented in the House of Commons by Hon. Sidney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture. It is a strong prohibition county. In 1873 they adopted the Dunkin Act which held its ground till it was replaced in 1885 by the Scott Act, which has been the law ever since. The liquor party have succeeded in securing the necessary twenty-five per cent. petition for a vote on the question of repeal. Voting will take place on June 20th.

Prohibitionists are carrying on a vigorous campaign. Hon. Mr. Fisher addressed several meetings, warmly endorsing the principle of prohibition and urging the people to stand by the law. Nearly all the Protestant clergymen in the county are also assisting in the contest. The liquor party are doing their utmost to capture what has been looked upon as one of the strongholds of temperance sentiment. The general opinion is that they will be disappointed, and that the people will maintain the law which has met with so much approval and success.

NOTES OF NEWS.

VERY MANY RESOLUTIONS.

It would take too much space to even mention the names of the many religious and temperance bodies that have during the past month made strong declarations of disappointment with the failure of the Government to introduce prohibitory legislation, and earnest appeals to Parliament to enact such legislation as will fairly embody the will of the people as expressed in the Plebiscite. The country is thoroughly stirred upon this question and there is trouble ahead for Members of Parliament who will refuse to recognize the votes polled by their constituents.

A SAMPLE CASE.

The *Montreal Witness*, of May 8th, reports a sad case of accident due to drink. A young man of South Durham, P.Q., who had been drinking freely in Montreal, was returning home by an evening train. At a way station he stepped out to walk on the platform and in attempting to get on the train after it had started, he fell under the car wheels which cut off both his legs. He died shortly after through loss of blood.

NO ROOM FOR LIQUOR-MEN.

An important Baptist Conference recently held at Louisville, Ky., had a hot discussion over a resolution declaring that in the opinion of our representatives present, no Baptist Church should allow a liquor dealer in its congregation. The resolution was adopted, being so worded as to refer only to persons dealing in liquor to be used for beverage purposes.

A SENSIBLE COURT.

The *Alliance News* reports the outcome of a small action by a supposedly big man:—An inn at Roseneath, Scotland, was for thirty years kept by a Mrs. Whyte. The Marquis of Lorne, owner of the property, removed the landlady and put in his own butler as publican, taking it for granted, no doubt, that the Licensing Court at Dumbarton would not refuse a licence to his representative. The Court, presided over by Lord Overton, did, however, refuse the application, and gave a licence to the ejected Mrs. Whyte for a new hotel situated in a neighbouring village.

NORWEGIAN LAW.

An Exchange informs us that a law has recently been passed in Norway prohibiting the sale of tobacco to any boy under the age of sixteen, without a signed order from an adult relative or employer. Even tourists who offer cigars to boys render themselves liable to prosecution. The police are instructed to confiscate the pipes, cigars and cigars of lads who smoke in the public streets. A fine for the offense is also imposed, which may range from two shillings to five pounds.

A LOT OF LICENCES.

The annual British return relating to brewers' licences for the 12 months from October 1st, 1897, to September 30th, 1898, has just been issued as a Parliamentary paper. Of persons licensed as brewers for sale there were in England and Wales 7,283, in Scotland 268, and in Ireland one. The number of licences issued to victuallers was 73,354 in England and Wales (and 42,152 licences to persons to sell beer), 11,885 in Scotland, and 18,405 in Ireland.

SUING A BISHOP.

Bishop Tugwell, of West Africa, in a recent visit to England, commented severely upon the drinking habits of Europeans on the coast where his duties lie. He stated that probably seventy-five per cent. of the deaths of foreigners were to be attributed to drinking habits, which also were chargeable with heavy mortality in the native population. On returning to West Africa the Bishop was sued by some residents on behalf of themselves and others on a charge of criminal libel.

DRUNKENNESS IN FRANCE.

A letter from Paris to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, says: "The progress of drunkenness in France is provoking something like dismay among all persons interested in the welfare of the welfare of the population. Until comparatively recently the French lower classes drank nothing but wine; or, in the northern provinces, beer and cider. Of late years, however, the consumption of cheap and bad alcohol has increased to such an extent as to become a very serious danger to the health of the community. Intemperance is particularly rampant in Normandy and Brittany. A Rouen physician, Dr. Brunon, has just published a pamphlet on the subject, which shows the evil to be even worse than was supposed. The special object of Dr. Brunon's investigations has been drunkenness among women. In Normandy things have come to such a pass that the women drink even more than the men, although the latter are the most inveterate tipplers in France."

AN IMPORTANT REPORT.

The 58th Annual Report of the Directors of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution is an interesting document. It contains the record of the year ending December 31st, 1898, in which 775 death claims were met? The insured in this institution are divided into two classes, a temperance section made up of total abstainers only, and a general section. The number of claims expected according to regular mortality rates was 384 in the temperance section, and the number of actual claims made 247. In the general section the claims expected were 411 and the claims made 373. These facts make a startling revelation of the great advantage in death rate that total abstainers have over even moderate drinkers. No insurance company will accept men of known intemperate habits.

HABIT AND CHARACTER.

Professor Wm. Jones, of Harvard, in his text-book on psychology, says—"Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying 'I won't count this time.' Well, he may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it, but it is being counted none the less. Down among the nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up, to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side, as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific, spheres by so many separate acts and hours of work."