

# The Camp Fire.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF  
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

Edited by F. S. SPENCE

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NOTE.—It is proposed to make this the cheapest Temperance paper in the world, taking into consideration its size, the matter it contains and the price at which it is published.

Every friend of temperance is earnestly requested to assist in this effort by subscribing and by sending in facts or arguments that might be of interest or use to our workers.

The editor will be thankful for correspondence upon any topic connected with the temperance reform. Our limited space will compel condensation. No letter for publication should contain more than two hundred words—if shorter, still better.

TORONTO, MAY, 1901

## BEHIND THE TIMES.

The license law of the Province of Ontario is sadly out of date. In some respects it is inconsistent and contradictory.

The License Act has from time to time been altered by the addition of amendments made without due consideration of the general character and intent of the law, so that it has become a piece of patchwork legislation that it is difficult to comprehend.

For a number of years there has been practically no progress made excepting some slight changes for the convenience of liquor sellers and the increase of the Government's revenue from the traffic. The license laws of other provinces have restrictive provisions which Ontario would do well to copy.

A year ago an official statement was made on behalf of the Government to the effect that this mongrel law was to be revised and consolidated. The promise has not yet been carried out.

The Premier has stated that his Government is favorable to temperance reform. Pending the settlement of the question of jurisdiction he will act wisely in taking steps to have the present law put upon a common sense and progressive basis.

## THE JULY MEETINGS.

Arrangements are being made for the Annual Prohibition Convention of the Province of Ontario and the Annual Meeting of the Dominion Alliance Council, both of which will be held in the City of Toronto. The days set apart for these important gatherings are July 9th and 10th.

No doubt the question of improvement of existing legislation will receive a good deal of attention, and the proposal to enlarge the scope of the Scott Act, as adopted at the Annual Convention of the Quebec Alliance, will receive careful consideration. Scott Act improvement is a live question in the Maritime Provinces where the Act is in successful operation over a great deal of territory.

Pending the final decision of the courts regarding the constitutionality of the Manitoba Prohibitory law, prohibition workers are feeling a good deal of anxiety and uncertainty. There is unfortunately among many of our friends a readiness to be too much affected by any immediate friction or delay. We must deal wisely with all such difficulties, accepting what we cannot overcome, and relying upon the righteousness of

our cause which is certain to triumph in spite of temporary hindrances.

The meetings at Toronto will be important. They will consider the questions of immediate parliamentary and electoral action. The House of Commons has definitely declared against the immediate enactment of national prohibition, but holds out a promise of some legislation. The indefiniteness of this promise is very unsatisfactory, and it is manifest that our legislators will only advance under the strong pressure of public demand.

The imminence of a general election for the Province of Ontario will make necessary such organization and effort as will secure a legislature definitely committed to supporting the Provincial Government's avowed policy of prohibition to the limit of the Province's ascertained constitutional power.

The usual reductions in railway fares will be available for delegates to these gatherings. All friends of the temperance cause are earnestly urged to do what they can to secure as large and representative attendance as possible.

## A COMING CONVENTION.

Among the many features of the Pan-American Exhibition, which will make Buffalo a centre of world-wide interest, will be a great series of conventions and conferences of every character and name. No fewer than 122 have already been announced.

In this day of organization, when every class or section of the community has established some bond of union and method of co-operation, these meetings for consultation and decision as to plans and methods, have become an important part of the life of the people.

Among the gatherings of moral reform workers one of the most interesting will be the National Prohibition Conference to be held on August 1st and 2nd. To it will come temperance workers from nearly every part of the continent. They will thus be able to unite at one time and with one expense, participation in important discussion of questions in which they are deeply concerned, and a visit to one of the greatest exemplifications of the achievements of modern civilization.

Canadian prohibitionists are requested to meantime keep these dates in mind. They will receive announcement later on of details of a programme of proceedings at this Convention, that will make them more desirous than ever of including a visit to the Buffalo Exhibition among their plans for the summer of 1901.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Notwithstanding the assurance of members of the Government that special efforts would be made to have the license law of Ontario rigidly enforced, there are still heard from many quarters loud complaints of systematic law violation and of serious failure of license inspectors to interfere with the wrong doing.

These complaints are well founded. License inspectors have given a good deal of attention to the prevention of liquor selling by persons who do not hold licenses. In many cases they seem inclined, however, to wink at disregard of the law by parties duly authorized to sell. Saturday night selling, Sunday selling, selling during prohibited hours, selling to minors, selling to intoxicated persons, are all offences of frequent occurrence. There is not a license inspector in the Province of Ontario who could not secure many convictions against licensees if he chose to do so.

There has also been lately manifested an unfortunate tendency on the part of License Commissioners to issue licenses without due regard to the statutory provisions which they are supposed to obey. For this unwise course of action the Provincial Government must be held responsible. A good deal of high sounding talk is sometimes heard about the independence and discretion of license officials. Everybody knows that these officers will not defy definite instructions from the Government by which they are appointed.

## SELLING LIQUOR TO CHILDREN.

Intense interest centred round the recent debate in the Imperial Parliament on the motion for the second reading of the bill to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors to children. An effort was made by the opponents of the measure to have it ruled out of order by the speaker, but the attempt failed and a division was taken, the result being a vote of 372 for the second reading and 44 against it. The Scotch and Welsh members voted solidly for the Bill. The Irish section of the House supported it by a majority of 78 and the English by a majority of 187.

## ABOLISH TREATING.

Treating is about the worst feature of the great liquor evil.

It is traditional, and quite as firmly grounded in our social system as is the habit of drinking.

It is one of the chiefest fostering influences of the drink usage.

It brings the temptation to drink in the way of almost everybody. People who are opposed to drink are placed in a perplexing position by a kind, sociable invitation to indulge.

It sways the multitudes to the shrine of Bacchus, and renders opposing measures and principles abortive in so many instances that it is almost impossible to make headway in favor of total abstinence.

It is a custom which really is accountable for the existence of three-fourths of the barrooms now in existence. If people had to drink alone in five years there would not be one drinking place where now there are five.

It causes men to stay in drinking rooms, and to drink far more than even debased appetite calls for. When one treats, each of his companions feels that he must return the compliment, and the result is a general carousal.

It takes men into drinking places who otherwise would never go there. Recently the writer witnessed a case where a young man stopped in front of a saloon and invited his two chums to have a drink. Both declined positively. He coaxed and pulled at their sleeves until finally one yielded. Then the two of them tried to take the other in, but failed. He stood outside in the cold whilst they went in and drank. He was a hero, but how long can he resist whilst his companions innocently seek his ruin?

Treating used to be considered a business necessity; but that sort of thing is frowned upon at present. So will treating of every kind be frowned down in a few years, and why not do so now?

Nine out of ten men who drink will unhesitatingly assert that if it were not for treating there would be a great diminution of drinking.

We can readily believe that an anti-treating society, even among people who are not total abstainers, can only do great good, and will tend to teetotalism in the end.—Royal Templar.

## ONLY A BABY.

One sultry day last summer, at a time when children of the poorer class in Philadelphia were dying by the score every week, a bloated old man staggered up the steps of a physician's dwelling. The boys shouted out after him. "Old Bourbon," the name by which he had been known in the locality in which he lived for many years.

"The baby's worse," he said, standing hat in hand, when he met the doctor coming out.

"You've been here for me every day for a week," explained the doctor. "I

cannot go again to day. I told the child's mother there was no chance, this morning, it was dying then."

"Won't you come now?"

"No; I have not a minute to spare. There are patients waiting, whom I can help."

"Old Bourbon" followed him to his carriage door, twisting his rag of a hat in his shaking hands. "She's—she's all I've got, doctor."

But the doctor, with a pitying nod, drove away, and the old man, nearly sobered by his keen distress, crept home to the attic where his little grandchild lay dying. Whatever nursing or kindness little Mary had known had come from "Old Bourbon." Her mother had six other children, and went out washing every day. The poor old drunkard and the innocent baby were left to form a strange friendship for each other. She called for him now feebly, as she lay on her mother's lap.

"Daddy! daddy! come to me!"

He knelt down and put his finger into the tiny withered hand. The tears ran down his bloated cheeks.

"God, leave her to me!" he muttered. "Daddy, come to Mary!" she cried once more, and then the little soul, whose taste of life had been so bitter, passed into the unseen.

It was only a baby. Its mother, who had six other half-starved children to feed, shed but few tears over it. The doctor sent in a certificate of its death with a dozen others. In the weekly bill of mortality there was an item. "Of cholera infantum, seventy." Little Mary was one of the seventy. That was all. Her record was ended. The world had done with her.

But an old trembling man crept next Sunday into the back pew of the little mission church, not far from the attic in which he lived. He stopped the clergyman when service was over.

"Why, is this you, Bour—I beg your pardon. What is your real name?"

"John Black, sir. I want to take my name again. I'm thinkin' of signin' the pledge, 'n' pullin' up for the rest of the time left," stammered the poor wretch.

The clergyman was wise and helpful. John did "pull up." He lived but a few months after that, but he did what he could to live a decent, honest, Christian life in that time.

"The Lord is merciful, John," his friend said to him, as he lay dying.

"I know it, sir. I'm not much acquainted with Him, but I've been tryin' to follow little Mary. I hear her always cryin', 'daddy, come to me.' I'm comin', an' I reckon He'll not turn me back."

Even the baby had its work to do, and had done it.—Morning and Day of Reform

## THE U. S. CANTEN: LAW.

Secretary Root, of the War Department, in discussing the defeat of the canteen said: "It is a very unfortunate affair. It is likely the soldiers will now get bad whiskey, instead of good whiskey."

It is said that the whole War Department feels aggrieved over the abolition of the canteen. They say the action of the Senate will seriously interfere with recruiting. Will some one please tell us who is running this government?—the people through their representatives in Congress, or the War Department. This seems a fitting time to demonstrate to these "high and mighty" officials that they are employed by the nation, and their salaries are paid by the nation, and that they occupy subordinate places, and the people rule.—Texas White Ribbon.

## INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

History records several instances of sober nations ousting those given to drink and luxury. It also records how drunken nations have been reclaimed to sobriety by religions which have insisted on total abstinence, and have so continued for hundreds of years. If that is not success, what is it? If some Mohammedans take to drink, more shame to the so-called Christians who persuade them to do so. What is evidently necessary is to make it as shameful and disgraceful for the Christian to take alcoholic poison as for the Mohammedan. In my opinion the Christian religion requires total abstinence with even greater cogency than that of Buddha or Mahomet.—Dr. J. J. Ridge.