

# LIQUOR BILL UNDER FIRE

## IN THE ASSEMBLY

by Bill Pierce

### Liquor, A Problem?

For some time now the problem of liquor and the laws concerned with liquor have received a great deal of attention at this university and in this province, although there is a tendency among the authorities to attempt to keep the problem in the background. The reason for this is, as we can safely assume, Politics! In spite of what has been written on the subject, no changes can be seen; on the contrary, it has resulted in a renewed enforcing of the antiquated New Brunswick liquor legislation.

Up until this day the university has "played ball" with our provincial government. However, we have been wondering whether a change of attitudes on the side of the university and student body could not bring about a change of these laws. We must not forget one thing. A university with its population of faculty and students has, or should have, by tradition an enormous amount of influence. It should be the centre of inspired and educated enthusiasm; it should be in a position in which it can face a modern world; it should be able and willing to take a firm stand on issues, controversial or not, that are of importance to the people of today and tomorrow.

We feel that if the university, regardless of the word "provincial" that usually precedes it, were willing to look the problem in the eye and consider it in a mature and academic, and also in a practical manner, a great deal of important influence could be exerted both on our legislators and those pressure groups that until this day have managed to keep our legislators from bringing the subject up for reasonable and mature discussion. With the words 'pressure groups' we refer, of course, directly to certain societies of the Victorian-minded, some of our religious groups and our united bootleggers.

Is it correct that we, the inhabitants of New Brunswick are indirectly ruled in some matters by those groups? Or are we open-minded enough that we accept the reasonable suggestion that academically trained people, to whom the higher education of Canadian people is trusted, and those people themselves, not rusted in traditional thinking and hypocritical argument, should have an influential voice in these and other matters?

We do not intend to create disturbance. We do not want to make people feel foolish, although many will say that we have every right and perhaps even the duty to do so to the smug. Our intentions are to make people look at themselves in an honest and critical manner and when thinking of university, municipal or provincial legislation, we want them to ask themselves the question: "Is this good government?" G.B.

Conservative opposition in the New Brunswick Legislature does not seem to be taking a united stand either for or against the new Liquor Control Act. One of the key speeches last Thursday evening during the debate was delivered by young Richard Hatfield, newly-elected P.C. member for Carleton. In his speech, Mr. Hatfield stressed very strongly the following points:

1. That no Government can properly legislate on liquor control.
2. That liquor control is a matter of education and of discipline on the part of the individual. He said, "the wisest legal measures will be effective only if, by education, society becomes prepared to accept these regulations as desirable."
3. That he does not think there is a great measure of self-discipline in New Brunswick. He said, "I do not think that New Brunswick society has been in any way educated to accept the liquor regulations contained in this bill."

He acknowledged that the Government has been under much pressure to change the laws; that there had been much criticism of the Bridges Commission Report; and that the Government cannot please everybody.

He said, although he thought it the Government's responsibility to control liquor, "I do not believe this Bill will, in fact, result in an improvement of Government control over liquor."

Replying to Mr. Hatfield, Jean-Marc Michaud (Liberal-Madawaska) said:

"Interested members of my constituency kept me on my toes," speaking in reference to the Temperance groups and other "drys" in Madawaska.

His views coincided with those of the Premier in that he felt, "this Bill will restore order and respect by virtue of the strict enforcement provided for and will produce (as the Premier said) 'the total eclipse of bootleggers'."

Speaking briefly, the Premier modified an earlier statement by saying that the new Act cannot be expected to completely wipe out bootleggers.

J. F. McInerney (P.C.-York) said, that he doubted the sincerity of the Government regarding their emphasis on reduction of the number of outlets. He also stressed the need for education regarding liquor.

George L. Keith (P.C.-Saint John City) asked: "Am I my brother's keeper?" indicating his feeling that it was not completely the responsibility of Government to legislate regarding the use of liquor. He re-stressed the value of education and re-habilitation of alcoholics. He felt that over-shadowing this new legislation there hung "a deep sense of politics."

The Premier said, that all employees of the New Liquor Commission will be Civil Servants, subject to the Civil Service Act, although the Commission would have the power to hire additional personnel during rush periods, such as the Season of Christmas.

The Premier noted after being questioned by R. G. L. Fairweather (P.C.-Kings and former Attorney-General), that it was the duty of the Attorney-General to enforce the new Act and to enforce liquor laws "even if they are not written here."

Also speaking for the Government, T. E. Duffie (Victoria), noted that whereas within the Scott Act of 1927, the Commission would dispense with penalties meted out by the Law Courts for liquor infractions, under the new Act, the Courts must hear all cases and the Attorney-General, not the Commission, would have the power to reverse the decisions of the Court.

Amid charges and counter-charges of "partisan politics" Fred McCain (P.C.-Carleton), literally exploded, severely reprimanding the entire legislature and reminded the Government "that the brains in the legislature are not necessarily concentrated on the right-hand side of the Chairman."

Replying to D. D. Patterson (P.C.-Saint John City), the Premier noted that the Commission was not responsible to the Legislature but to the Attorney-General, and that that was sufficient. Again answering Mr. Patterson, the Premier said that the Legislature could fire the Commission as they could under the 1927 Scott Act.

## "WE FOUND

The Brunswickan, in pursuing its inquiries into the accommodations' question, this week assigned reporters Gord Mockler and John Drew to investigate rumours regarding a centrally-located, low-rental block. This is their story:

We have uncovered the greatest scandal in years. In spite of Carol MacPherson's article last week on accommodation problems downtown, we can announce that they no longer exist. We have found one block of apartments where there are nine double rooms simply furnished, not being let out on any regular basis at all! The rooms (at least 6 x 5 feet) are most attractively painted and simply furnished. Three walls are painted in two-tone coloring (yellow and gray) whilst the fourth wall provides an interesting experiment in a new iron bars ventilation system. Fine murals, mainly in ancient Canadian hieroglyphics, and verse, equal to any Restoration Vulgarities, cover the walls. Each room is provided with its own toilet though airwick's deodorization plan does not appear to have reached these parts yet. Lights are bracketed in an attractive Olde English style. The landlords serve adequate breakfasts.

## A HOME . . . "

During our stay we had egg sandwiches, cookies and tea (sugarless) served in decorative green beer bottles.

This accommodation is located centrally in Queen Square and is a mere four minutes by black maria from the campus. The block is quite silent (except for the occasional clanging of a gate) and ideal for study. The landlords are only too anxious to have UNB students filling these rooms. Local citizens whole-heartedly support the project.

So, students, it's up to you. Put on those distinctive red and black jackets, go downtown right now and you'll find them waiting for you with open doors.