

## Contributed Articles.

## COMPENSATION FOR PROHIBITION.

To the Editor of THE CANADA CITIZEN,

SIR,—In yours of the 26th inst., on page 147, you quote some extracts from articles recently appearing in *The Toronto World*, and intended by the writer thereof as arguments in favor of compensation to the liquor dealers in the event of prohibition being enacted.

The writer alluded to lays down his argument as follows: "It is only just and equitable that compensation should be made to the trade for wiping out a business in which they have sunk all their means, and to carry on which they have paid heavy license fees."

There is a grim fitness in the term used by the liquor apologist in the above, viz., "Wiping out." It is used so appropriately, and it is so correctly applicable to something foul or offensive that the writer thereof evidently has the correct idea of the traffic being of that character—in short, of it being a nuisance. He is only correct on one side, however, in saying that they (the traffickers) "have paid heavy license fees to carry on the business." It would be more correct to say that they have paid heavy license fees for the sake of the much heavier profits obtained from the traffic.

Commercial history shows that large investments have been made, and that many people have sunk all their means in enterprises that have worked for the general good, and that have had the advantage of being entirely unrepined of any injurious influence. These have, withal, contributed duly and profitably to the public purse during their operation. Then, in course of man's progress, improved methods and devices have been brought out which have, almost at once, rendered the preceding ones useless and valueless, but where have we an instance of those losing by the superceded system or appliances claiming or getting compensation from the public because intelligence and discovery brought out something preferable to them? And most emphatically in the case of the liquor traffic where would be the justice of compensating those interested in the discarded thing, when the very reason of its being discarded was its long and clearly established character of destructiveness to all the best interests of the community, including that of its being financially a burden upon it?

In advocating compensation the writer alluded to employs the term "equitable." Now, if "equitable" means anything it means equalness or fairness between parties concerned. The parties in this case are the liquor traffickers on the one side, who have had many long years of money-making out of the people, and the public on the other side, who have endured for the same period the incalculable and unspeakable evils solely and directly resulting from the aforesaid traffic, and which have been tolerated on the mere grounds that the traffic was profitable to those who engaged in it. Now, if it be conceded that the traffic deserves to be extinguished, and if an estimate be made of all the shrinkage in the value of property and of all other losses that would accrue to the dealers by "wiping it out," and that this were put in dollars as their claim, surely, in fairness, this sum ought to be reduced by all the money they have made out of it in the past, and certainly also the injuries to the community must form a recognized claim against the account, if the meaning of the word "equitable" be at all regarded.

If the idea of compensation be admissible, it should be on the strictly correct mutual principle of *compensation with restitution*, and in this case it must be admitted that even if the total confiscation of all the liquor traffic properties were effected, and the addition made thereto of all the heaped-up fortunes of the traffickers, the whole would be but as a drop in the ocean compared with the sum necessary to compensate for the evils perpetrated on our race by it. In the face of all this, it is contended that because the liquor traffic is asked to stop ruining our people it should be compensated for doing so. Verily, modesty is a quality that does not adorn the liquor trade. Has this bad tenant got a perpetual lease, with power to destroy *ad libitum*?

The writer that I am thus criticising says also "that he is in favor of prohibition with compensation: the compensation to take the form of a moderate allowance in money to all the trade, and a certain number of years to get out of the business and to turn the capital they have sunk in it into some other channel."

That writer thus acknowledges that the liquor traffic is not only a nuisance that ought to be "wiped out," but that he himself

would prohibit it under certain conditions, namely, "a moderate allowance of time and money," or, in plainer words,

An allowance to pay the expense of the flit,  
And a reasonable term of notice to quit.

The growth of temperance sentiment for many years back has been such that the liquor dealers must be classed as downright stupid not to have received that notice. The progress of temperance and prohibitory legislation in most enlightened countries, and in Canada amongst them, is so marked, that *downright stupid* is a mild term to apply to the dealer who says he has not yet received that *notice to quit*.

The Act of our own Dominion Parliament, commonly called the Scott Act, has been now some six years on record. It is a specific and legal form of the service of that *notice to quit*, and the man who will not take these as *notices to quit* simply refuses to accept service, although served on him by all the courts of the realm, from the British Privy Council down to his own conscience, and he plainly challenges the right of intelligence and truth to go onward, because he can show how he could make some money by their standing still or by their going backward.

Now, as the traffic has had an abundant "certain number of years to get out of the business," or an ample *notice to quit*, the other little formality suggested by "a moderate allowance in money to all in the trade," is clearly more than made up to them by the profits they have made during all the years they have gone on in the traffic while that *notice to quit* has been over their heads—that handwriting on the wall, which has been so plain that distiller, brewer and barkeeper could all easily interpret it, requiring neither soothsayer or astrologer or a Daniel to decipher that inevitable *notice to quit* issued from the supreme authority of the people.

W. H. RODDEN.

Toronto, Sept. 27, 1884.

## Campaign News.

DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND.—The petition for these counties is completed and deposited in the office of the Sheriff at Cobourg. It contains 4,700 names, a large number more than what the law requires. Everything promises fair for a glorious victory.

BRANT.—The campaign is going on bravely. The Antis held a meeting at Burford last week in Barrica's Hall. Mr. Darbottle presided. W. H. Griffin spoke for the anti-temperance party, and was ably replied to by Rev. T. L. Wilkinson, who completely refuted the fallacies of his opponent, and carried the audience for the Scott Act.

LEEDS AND GRENVILLE.—At the Brockville assizes the Grand Jury, a large and influential body of representative men of the county unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

"That in the opinion of this Grand Jury the liquor traffic is a great evil, and that in order to repress this evil we trust that the Temperance Act of 1878 may be adopted in the united counties of Leeds and Grenville."

FRONTENAC AND KINGSTON.—The temperance men of the district held a temperance meeting on Sept. 26th, at Glenvale, under the auspices of the Sydenham Blue Ribbon Association. There were fifteen speakers. The Scott Act was discussed, and strong reasons advanced for the passage of the Act in Frontenac. A motion, made to the effect that application be had for the submission of the Act to the people, was carried. A committee was named to take the management of the matter. It meets here on Thursday to arrange details and discuss the advisability of testing the popularity of the Act in the city.

ELGIN AND ST. THOMAS.—A convention of Scott Act workers met at St. Thomas on the 26th ult, which was largely attended for the purpose of seeing how the work was progressing in the county of Elgin and city of St. Thomas. Mr. T. W. Michael, of Aylmer, was elected chairman.

A large number of canvassers returned their petitions, it being ascertained that there are already over five hundred signatures more