

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, JULY, 1896.

THE ELECTIONS.

At the time of writing this article we have not received from all the Provinces of the Dominion, full information as to the personal strength of the prohibition party in the new House of Commons. We have knowledge however, of many changes that are for the better. Although we regret the temporary loss from Parliament of some of our staunchest and warmest friends, we are thankful to be able to point to many new members whose temperance record is unassailable and who are certain to prove invaluable accessions to our ranks.

Never before in a general election was the temperance question so generally forced upon the attention of parliamentary candidates. Never before were so many candidates pledged to vote against the liquor traffic. Probably never before were there cast so many votes that were polled simply for the best candidate from a temperance standpoint.

There are a good many men in the new Parliament pledged to support prohibition regardless of party considerations. There are still more committed to the policy of taking a plebiscite, and promised to support prohibition, if that plebiscite shows a majority of the people in favor of such legislation.

Although we have not accomplished all we would desire, although partyism has carried away many captives, although other questions crowded the prohibition question out of the way, yet out of the conflict we come stronger in numbers, with fuller prestige, better prepared for whatever the future has in store for us. We have a right to "Thank God and take courage."

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT.

One of the changes to be brought about under the new regime is the transference of Sir Oliver Mowat from the Premiership of Ontario to a position in the Dominion Cabinet. Sir Oliver was looked upon by prohibitionists, regardless of party, as a true and earnest friend of our cause. The regret at his removal from the Ontario Cabinet will be diminished by the knowledge that he will have as full or fuller opportunity, in his new sphere of action, to help that cause along. His presence in the Dominion Parliament and the Dominion Government ought to be a decided advantage to us in the battle we have to fight in the national arena.

Nor will he be lacking, in provincial affairs, a successor who will follow in his footsteps. Waving for the moment the important fact that the leader of Ontario Politics must be in touch with public opinion, and that means that he must be ready to recognize the prohibition sentiment of the community we may look hopefully to the men from whom that successor is to be chosen. We have a right to be proud of the high character, the clean record, of the men who constitute our Provincial Government. Liberals and Conservatives alike take satisfaction in this fact.

It is generally anticipated that the Hon. Mr. Hardy will be the new Premier. If so, we shall have at the head of affairs a man who has publicly spoken quite as strongly and determinedly in favor of our cause as has Sir Oliver Mowat. With him will be associated others who have almost as high a reputation for temperance principles and advocacy as for anything else.

We shall look confidently to the new Government for a greeting of encouragement and a promise of definite aid to the big Convention on July 16th.

A DOMINION PLEBISCITE.

We cannot always fight upon lines or with weapons of our own choosing. Prohibitionists are fully convinced that there ought to be no necessity for another plebiscite. Four provinces have already voted and declared for total prohibition by overwhelming majorities. Our cause ought to be sufficiently strong to convince the most sceptical that the time for legislation has come.

Politicians however, are not willing to accept as conclusive the evidence that has been adduced. Many of them declare that there is not yet full proof that the electorate of the Dominion as a whole, desires a prohibitory law. Others believe that such legislation would be more fully warranted, less partisan in character, and more effective in operation, if it followed immediately a public declaration in its favor.

The Liberal Party which now controls the Government of Canada has declared its intention of taking a general plebiscite. The leaders of the party have unhesitatingly declared that if this plebiscite results in a substantial majority in favor of prohibition, then prohibitory legislation will be immediately enacted. Whatever we may think of the policy, it must be admitted that this is the best opportunity that has yet been offered to us.

Different church bodies in their annual meetings have expressed their pleasure with the announcement that has been made. Temperance and prohibitory organizations have accepted the challenge and are getting ready for the fray. The time is past for discussing the wisdom for this line of action. We are face to face with it, and must simply prepare to wrest from the conditions confronting us the greatest victory that our cause has yet achieved.

These facts will give added interest to the great Convention to be held in Toronto on the 16th and 17th. We sincerely hope that it will be such a gathering as our country has never seen before, of earnest, united aggressive prohibitionists, determined to march to speedy victory through the door that has now been flung open before them.

THE PARLIAMENTARY BAR.

It will have to go! No other question submitted by prohibitionists to prospective members of Parliament met with a more cordial or general

response than did the question about the future of this hoary institution. There is in the new House of Commons a strong contingent of earnest men definitely pledged to do all they can to secure the abolition of the sale of intoxicating liquor within the precincts of the Parliament Buildings. We wish them success, and sincerely hope that the discreditable business of making men drunk will never again be carried on under the direct supervision of any officer or employee of our national Government.

AN IMMEDIATE CONFLICT.

Whatever other action is taken at the Convention on the 16th inst. there is little doubt that it will be decided to inaugurate at once a vigorous local option campaign.

The conditions for work on this line are unusually favorable. The Privy Council has in most unmistakable terms declared the validity of our Provincial local option law. The measure is simple in its details, and has proved effective in operation. The electors of any city, town, township or incorporated village may avail themselves of its privileges. The machinery for its enforcement is ample.

Local option by-laws enacted at any time during the remainder of the present year will come into operation on the first day of May, 1897. There is time for preparation. There is opportunity for educative work. The voting can be done deliberately, and with every precaution against mistake.

Why should we not have the liquor traffic absolutely wiped out of one-half of our Ontario municipalities next year. Earnestly we urge upon our many readers to take immediate steps in this direction. Full details regarding the mode of procedure will be printed from time to time in the CAMP FIRE. Any other desired information regarding the matter may be obtained by writing to the Alliance Secretary, who will cheerfully and promptly give our workers any advice or assistance in his power.

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

The heartlessness and meanness of the liquor traffic is not properly appreciated by the general public. It is true that much money is spent in drink by those who are wealthy, but it is also true that there is spent an immense amount of money, for want of which helpless wives and innocent children starve and suffer and die. Often the means of obtaining liquor is stolen from squalid homes and long-suffering relatives. *It is true that in this Christian land our brewers, distillers and drink-sellers are growing rich on the spoils of the cruellest robbery,—robbery that sometimes involves the brutal murder of women and babes by needless hunger, neglect and disease.* Some men, who would have the world believe that they would scorn to accept a dollar offered as charity's dole, will promptly pocket the same dollar if it has been first given to a famishing wife and stolen from her by a drink-debauched creature who brings it as the price of his own debasement and sin.

We are urged to sustain the traffic because the traffickers must make a living, but it will cost us less to keep them by charity than it now costs us to keep those who are pauperized by their business. It is the veriest nonsense to talk of men being above accepting alms when they are willing to take the same bounty second-hand, and brought to them by real degradation and crime.

THE DOMINION ALLIANCE.

The great Convention to be held on the 16th day of July will be the sixteenth annual meeting of the Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance under its present name. This organization is a comprehensive union of the various working temperance forces of the province. It is made up of representatives from churches, temperance societies and other organizations favoring prohibition. Every such institution has a right to representatives in the Alliance meetings. These united organizations will elect a large Executive Committee of wise and earnest workers to supervise during the year the general carrying out of the policy agreed upon at the annual meeting, and will give information and advice through its Secretary to workers in every part of the Province.

It would be impossible to recount in the limits of a short article the many campaigns which the Alliance has inaugurated and, with the co-operation of sister associations, pushed to success during the time of its existence. The restriction in the number of liquor licenses; the powers given to localities to prevent or prohibit the issue of licenses; the enactment and enforcement of the Scott Act, and other local option by-laws; the steady increase in the rigidity of the license law; the progressive curtailment of the liquor traffic in our province; the securing of the provincial plebiscite that so overwhelmingly proved the Province to be in favor of prohibition; the vindication of local option in the law courts; the settlement of the question of jurisdiction; all these and many other achievements have been in every case aided and in most cases inaugurated by this organization.

In recalling what has been accomplished we ought not to lose sight of the splendid growth of right sentiment in the community, which has been the outcome of the many hard battles that have been fought and the discussion that has attended these campaigns. We are to-day far from where we would like to be, but we are in a position of unusual strength. Behind us there is a public opinion that must ensure better success, in whatever is immediately undertaken, than could possibly have been secured under other circumstances.

"The field is ripe unto harvest." The cruel drink traffic is still rampant and strong. The time has come for a united advance against the strongholds of that traffic. We have before us opportunities for which we have a right to be thankful. Let us earnestly, prayerfully, unitedly, go into the fight. We may do so with the confident assurance that the record of the past is full of promise for the success of the future, and in the hope that ere long we shall see the liquor traffic de-legalized in every part of our fair country.

"If the community has no reason to be surprised at the combination of the Licensed Victuallers, they assuredly have no reason to be surprised at the rise of the Alliance. The ultimate issue of the struggle is certain. If anyone doubts the preponderance of good over evil in human nature, he has only to study the history of moral crusades. The enthusiastic energy and self-devotion with which a moral cause inspires its soldiers always have prevailed, and always will prevail, over any amount of self-interest or material power arrayed on the other side. The Alliance is already powerful and growing in power."

—Prof. Goldwin Smith, in a letter on the United Kingdom Alliance.