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## Talks by Tiberius.

### THE PROHIBITION ACT — DOES IT PROHIBIT?

It seems to me that the question of Prohibition has come to stay. It is probably one of the most debated and debatable of questions and ever calls for calm, sober judgment, and treatment. The fanatic on any subject is liable to do more harm than good. On the whole, people are not fanatics. There may have been instances on record in History where people, en masse, have been carried away by some fanatical conception. The Children's Crusade for the reclamation of the Holy Land from the Unspeaking Turk may be cited as an example.

Yet, notwithstanding the exception, the average intellect and enthusiasm may be said to be bounded by sanity and safety. The Prohibition fanatics have not, very much, helped the cause. I shall endeavour to deal with the subject now—calmly, impartially and in view of every possible position which may be taken up by anyone.

The question is: Does the "Prohibition Act," prohibit?

### THE PROHIBITION ACT—ITSELF.

In spite of anything that might be said to the contrary, it must be admitted that the Act, as a piece of legal literature, is not perfect. Let it be now well understood that I am dealing with the Newfoundland Prohibition Act. The first thing I say in relation to it is: it is not perfect as a piece of legal literature. An eminent lawyer has repeatedly said so in

court. The fact that it is so easily and successfully evaded is another proof. Everybody now knows that essences and dopes can be imported without any danger of criminal proceedings, and men and women can get drunk as often as they like, and if they do not commit a breach of the peace, their drunkenness is not punishable by law, providing that they can prove their inebriation to be caused by some essence. The records of the St. John's Central Court (which is presided over by Judge Morris), dating since the famous Soper case, will afford ample proof also of this. The doctors also have found a loop-hole in the Act, and though on paper, they seem to be bound and limited by regulations and laws, yet we all know that it is through the doctors that most of the liquor is gotten which fact, is largely responsible for the drunks referred to. A constable will hesitate to prosecute a case of drunkenness unless he is pretty sure of a conviction. In one session recently twelve cases of drunkenness were before Judge Morris, but all the charges were dismissed. What encouragement have the police to do their duty. None. Simply because the wording of the Act is faulty, so it is said.

### NO PERFECT LEGISLATIVE ACTS.

But are not all Acts and Laws literally imperfect? Was there ever a Government which framed any bill legally and literally perfect? No. Was there ever a lawyer that could interpret any law in perfect sympathy with all the fellows in his profession?

Again I say: no. A lawyer is paid to interpret the Statutes of his country in the best interests of his client and he usually earns what he gets. The law against murder is not literally perfect, and yet not one in these days and parts kills another without criminal proceedings, and executions, if guilty. The Prohibition Act is not literally perfect, yet it is violated, and that without punishment to the one who violates it. The literary phase has nothing to do with the carrying out of the Act evidently. If a man commits murder the public demand life for life, and the Act which says "thou shalt not kill" is respected and carried out. If a man imports liquors containing over 2 per cent. alcohol he violates the Prohibition Act, I take that to include essences and dopes as well as the generally recognized spirituous liquors, i.e., any liquors containing over 2 per cent. alcohol. If the public demanded the punishment of the importer, he would be punished. The public, however defend the importer. Church meetings are held in which the importer is held up to be an exemplary citizen. Result: The Prohibition Act does not prohibit.

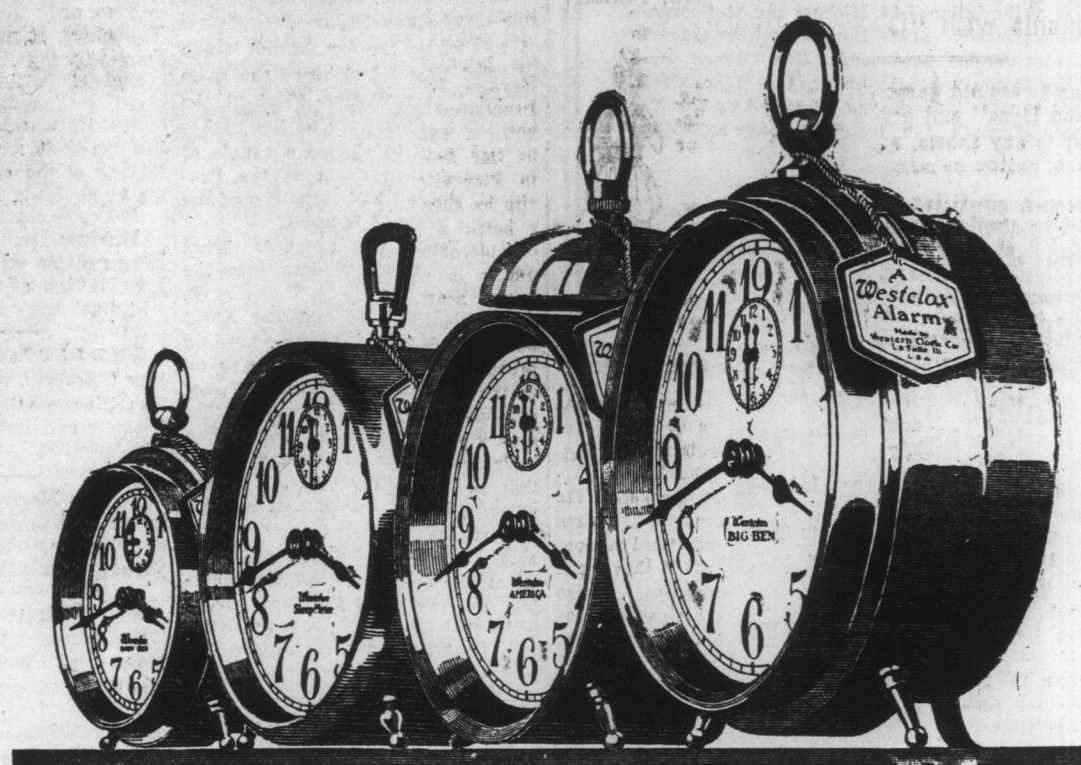
### THE ACT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

If it is a crime to violate the Prohibition Act in spirit, the official Government through the Department of the Controller, is a criminal of the worst type. There are only two reasons for there being a Controlling Department at all and those are given in the Act. Anything beyond that is illegal:—To supply druggists with sufficient spirits with which to meet the demands of the prescriptions from the Medical men. The medical men in turn are again controlled with regard to quantities of liquor which they may prescribe. The second reason is to supply priests with wine for "Sacramental Purposes." Now both these reasons are valid and good, let it be granted so at any rate. But any one can give a fair guess as to how much alcoholic liquors this country can need, honestly, in medicinal quantities. It is also an easy guess as to how much the clergy honestly need for Sacramental Purposes. Add these together, plus any extra quantity for engineering purposes, subtract the total from the amount imported by the Controller's Department, and you get the quantity of booze which is imported, and which is distributed, in violation of the Prohibition Act, by the official Government. What is more, you will get a surprise as to the quantity which is thus illegally imported by the Government. I shall not say anything at present about how a city editor fills out his Doctor's Book of Prescriptions for Boozie, or how the First Minister of the Crown, has, on occasions, entertained his friends in private and in public, on the result of "scripts," which he himself has made out. It would be highly disgusting and entertaining to see some of the scripts which the Controller has filled within the past three years. The present Controller is too kind hearted to refuse to fill out a script, even when it is illegally made out. What a dear kind man he is, to be sure! Still, still—the Prohibition Act does not prohibit; because the official Government violates it. What can be the expectation. The Prohibition Act is not acted.

### THE ACT AND THE PROHIBITIONIST.

When the last count came in from St. Barbe District, which showed that at least 40 per cent. of the voters of the country desired Prohibition, a great cry went up to High Heaven. Drunkards thanked God that the doors of open temptation to drink were closed. Mothers and fathers rejoiced together that at last their sons and daughters could walk Water Street and Duckworth Street or any other Street and not be tempted by the open saloon. Wives who who had suffered with their children on account of drunken husbands, empty purses, insufficient food and clothing, were made happy with the thought that at last Newfoundland was dry. Their outlook on life was made very much brighter. Business men and employers of labour, quite probably and properly looked forward to less trouble on account of men losing time and strength and efficiency by frequenting the "bar." A wonderful organization had sprung up and every member of it was enthusiastic about the thing. A great wave of moral intensity swept everything before it. Congratulations are due to the Central Prohibition Committee. To all the committees and to all the noble men and women who helped to make the fight a splendid victory.

BUT ALAS AND ALAS. The hour of triumph is often the weakest hour of the victor. The victory won, the enthusiasm dies; the Central Committee disbanded; the Temperance forces cease to be. The end is attained. The law is on the Statute Book. Peter and the others go fishing, and the rest go cutting wood, and the Prohibition sentiment suffers its first shock. There is no one to see that the "Act" is carried out, no one to keep the fires burning. Down goes the Temperance stocks. And what is worse, among the persons prosecuted by a faithful and courageous Superintendent of Police for violations of the Prohibition Act, are those who figured most prominently in the Prohibition Campaign. Then the Prohibition Act does not prohibit. Don't blame



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the Act, blame the actors. The Act may be as right as right, but unless its chief exponents support it by obeying its provisions, of what service is it?

### THE "ACT" AND THE PEOPLE.

Everybody knows that the Prohibition Act is on the Statute Book. Everybody does not know about the anti-sweepstake law, and the anti-cigarette-to-taverns—law, but such a great furor has attended all the successful campaigns in behalf of Temperance that all must have known about them, and certainly all knew of the Prohibition Act. Law-abiding and law-loving citizens will respect a law of the land, especially if it has been brought about by the expressed will of the people. Yet one cannot but be impressed with the fact that the very people who have made demands for a Prohibitory law, have made, and



do make themselves very busy, searching for ways and means by which to avoid the provisions of the very Act which they were so eager for but three years ago. I met a man a few days ago who was more than sober; his breath smelled of Vanilla and some other stuff. He was arguing for the abolition of the Prohibition Act and contending that it had failed owing, to what he called, "Prohibition Hypocrites." He was too much of a fool to see that the Prohibition Act was failing because he and others would not let it succeed. They so love the "Distilled Damnation" that even their ordinary and usual respect for law, failed them in connection with this one law. Do not blame the Act my friend, blame the actors. The law is good and the Prohibition Act would prohibit if the people would not violate it.

Admitted the law is not literally perfect; our answer is, no law is, even that which is best observed. Admitted the Prohibition Act does not prohibit. There are two good reasons why, viz:—

- The Prohibitionists have gone out of business for the most part. Only an occasional voice is heard on the desert air.
- The people are not law abiding. Let the Prohibitionists get busy with their organizations and their enthusiasm; and let the people love the law and obey it, and the Prohibition Act will prohibit, and ought to do.

The Copenhagen police convey any person found intoxicated in the street to his home in a cab, the fare being charged to the establishment where the liquor was served.

### "Three Acres and a Cow." Will He Become Champion?

The name of that veteran politician, Mr. Jesse Collings, who recently celebrated his 89th birthday, will, of course, always be associated with the cry "Three acres and a cow," which arose through his agitation in Parliament for better benefits for agricultural labourers.

He has always had their welfare at heart, for his grandfather worked as a labourer at 8s. a week, while his mother, as a girl, earned 6d. a day on a farm and ultimately became the mother of eleven children.

The phrase, by the way, has led to many amusing incidents. Mr. Collings was discussing in Parliament a housing scheme for the East End of London, and was arguing that each building should be composed of three rooms when Dr. Tanner evoked a roar of laughter by inquiring:—  
"And where would you put the cow?"

The most remarkable fact about Tom Newman, who at twenty-five promises to win the billiards championship, is that he is practically self-taught.

"As a boy," he told me, "I had the run of a billiard room in my father's hostelry. I suppose I must have had some natural aptitude, for at eleven I was making breaks of over 100; at thirteen breaks of 200; and then beat all my records in one match by making 610."

Top-of-the-table play is Newman's strong point, and in this connection he told me this story. "I was playing in a match in Edinburgh, and was in great form at the top of the table. As I left the saloon I overheard one spectator say to another, 'Say, Jack, the reason we can't play billiards is that we play at the wrong end of the table.'"

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