

The Camp Fire.

A. MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

Edited by F. S. SPENCE

ADDRESS - - TORONTO, ONT.

Subscription, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS a Year.

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, OCTOBER, 1896.

THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.

The duty of the hour, as far as prohibitionists are concerned, is undoubtedly preparation for the coming campaign. It would be folly to waste time in discussing the question of the desirability or undesirability of the plebiscite plan. The contest is coming and we must be ready for it.

The struggle will be such as we have never experienced before in the history of the temperance reform in Canada. This will be because there never before was a contest that meant so much to either the liquor traffic or the prohibition cause.

It will not be an indefinite vote, the usefulness of which will depend upon some other undecided question, as was the case when the provincial plebiscites were held. The leader of the Dominion Parliament has pledged himself to obey the voice of the people. No one questions the right of the Dominion Parliament to enact the necessary legislation. The vote will be for the life or death of the legalized liquor traffic.

The best thought and zeal and effort of all our forces must be consecrated to this crusade. No helper however weak or humble can be relieved from duty. If we are united and true to the stupendous responsibility of this great opportunity we shall win the victory for which we have long hoped and toiled and prayed.

We therefore earnestly press upon all our workers the importance of the action recommended by the Dominion Alliance, namely, the formation in every municipality of a special organization for the purpose of planning and carrying out the details of the campaign which will shortly be inaugurated.

LOCAL OPTION.

A number of inquiries have come to the office of this paper regarding the provisions of the Ontario Local Option Law. A pamphlet has been prepared setting out the details of the law, and giving information regarding the necessary procedure to secure local prohibition thereunder.

Any friend of the temperance cause who desires a copy of this pamphlet may obtain the same by stating his wish on a post card addressed to F. S. Spence, 51 Confederation Life Building, Toronto. It is specially requested that parties taking action on this line will send to same address information of the action they are taking and its results.

The present is a good time to deal with this matter. Prohibitory by-laws may now be passed by municipal councils and submitted to a vote of the electors at the approaching municipal election. By this means expense will be avoided. Under this wise legislation the liquor traffic may be abolished in a large portion of the Province of Ontario on the first of May, 1897.

LICENSE LAW AMENDMENTS.

A deputation of prohibition workers will shortly wait upon the Ontario Government to ask for certain needed amendments to the Provincial license law.

The plebiscite cannot be taken before next year. It is absolutely impossible that any legislation could follow the vote before the parliamentary session of 1898. Such legislation will not likely come entirely into force immediately on its enactment.

We have therefore the licensed liquor traffic on our hands for some years to come, except in so far as we get rid of it by the powers now vested in electors by existing legislation. The Scott Act is available. The Ontario Local Option Law is available. Other restrictive measures are available. There are, however, many other respects in which the liquor traffic may be effectually curtailed by provincial legislation. It is for the attainment of this result that the action above set out is about to be taken.

The Provincial Convention held in Toronto in July recommended a certain number of proposed amendments to the license law. Others will occur to the minds of temperance workers. Anyone who has any valuable idea regarding this matter will confer a favor by sending the same speedily to the Secretary of the Dominion Alliance.

PARLIAMENTARY LIQUOR SELLING

The Dominion Parliament in the session which has just closed took an advance step that will have the warm approval of the people of Canada, including many who are not total abstainers, as well as those who are ardent advocates of temperance. No liquor selling is to be carried on any longer in the House of Commons.

It is not simply that the bar is suppressed, but that the sale of liquor is prohibited. The representatives of the people have shown their appreciation of public opinion, consistency and right principle. The fact that there was in this act some self restraint, and some confession of former wrong-doing makes the course adopted all the more commendable. It was unselfish, straightforward and manly.

The Senate, slower to move, less amenable to public opinion and composed of older men with more fixedness of habit, has not gone so far. It has, however, made a step. The sale of liquor in the Senate restaurant must be confined exclusively to Senators. This will limit materially the evil of which that institution is capable.

Why should this action have been necessary? Ottawa is part of the Province of Ontario. The territory upon which the Parliament Buildings stand is under Provincial control. So far as we have been able to learn no license has been issued to take effect in the Parliament Buildings. It seems to us that any liquor selling there is utterly illegal, that the man who sells and the man who buys are both direct violators of the license law. Why has not the local License Inspector taken some action regarding the matter?

CLUBS.

Under the present restrictive license laws of the different Canadian Provinces the liquor traffic is confined within comparatively small limits. The laws for the punishment of illicit liquor selling have been gradually becoming more severe and more effective.

At the same time there has been growing up an evil of a serious character, with which the officers of the law are either unable or unwilling to deal. In our large cities and towns there are being multiplied clubs, in which the sale of liquor is systematically carried on, often regardless of all the conditions about hours, etc., which are imposed upon regular licensees. In some cases we understand the charters issued to Clubs authorize this liquor selling.

This action we cannot understand. The law of the land absolutely prohibits the sale of liquor without license. How the Government can authorize the doing, on any pretext, of what the statutes expressly forbid is what we cannot comprehend.

The difficulty, however, may easily be dealt with. The Legislatures can pass laws providing that liquor selling in Clubs shall be governed by the law that relates to liquor selling elsewhere. This will effectually stop Club liquor selling on Sundays and out of hours. It will permit of the inspection of Club premises by the license law officials. It will abolish many of the abuses connected with the present system.

In all probability many Clubs that now dispense liquor would not put themselves in the position of being recognized liquor selling institutions. They would simply get along without liquor at all, to the advantage of their members and their elevation in public opinion. It is sincerely to be hoped that at their next sessions the Provincial Legislatures will deal with this important matter.

THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT.

It is hard to be patient with the many delays in our progress towards effective legislation against the drink evil. This is specially the case when we read the shocking details that every day's newspapers furnish of almost incredible outrage, brutality and crime, the direct result of the liquor traffic.

It would be impossible to present in this paper from month to month, even in the most condensed form, a statement of the heart-sickening details of atrocities perpetrated on innocent victims in Christian lands, equal in barbarity to the worst recorded brutality of Turks towards helpless Armenians. It is marvellous that men can look on this appalling curse with any complacency. It is mournful to find them face to face with it, discussing such comparatively unimportant details as the question of revenue, or the desirability of compensating the men who are growing rich out of this debauchery and sin, when the religious sentiment of a Christian nation says their murder and rapine shall cease.

Yet the whole infernal system is sustained by legislative authorization, profit sharing by organized society, the patronage and approval of many thousands of professing Christians, and, worst of all, the endorsement and argument of men whose profession it is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Surely cowardice, cupidity and custom are strong in this land. Have we not more reason to mourn over our national sin and shame than to boast of our civilization and Christianity.

NO OPPOSITION.

We have as many temperance societies in operation as it is wise to endeavor to support. The organization recommended for the plebiscite campaign is not in any sense a new society or a rival of any existing institution.

It is manifest that no temperance lodge, no single church, can conduct the campaign upon which we are entering in any locality. None of these organizations takes in the whole community. Each of them has other work to do. The members of all of them may, however, unite for the time being, in a special committee or league to look after this particular work.

It is not proposed that there should be a new society with weekly meetings, high membership fees and demanding the continued attention of any set of workers. Our forces should be organized more as are the political parties. We want in every centre a definite organization, that will be to some extent dormant except when needed, but will be ready for the fight when it comes. There will then be responsible officers who will summon the rank and file of the workers, with whom our central body can correspond, and in which all regular organizations may co-operate.

It will thus be seen that the Alliance or League or Union or Club organized for the plebiscite campaign will be simply the Union Committee of all organizations, the bond which will unite them for effective work, the weapon with which they may strike effective blows, the power through which they may make their power effective for the overthrow of the liquor traffic and the establishment of right principle embodied in wise laws.

TO CAMPAIGNERS.

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