

THE POPULAR VETO

EXPLAINED BY SIR WILFRID LAWSON.

The British Licensing System Unsound Not in Harmony with Liberalism

ONE OF BRITAIN is far behind Canada in anti-liquor legislation. But she is progressive, and popular opinion against licensed evil is rapidly becoming very strong.

Liberalism has been described as the rule "of the people, for the people, by the people."

Our present system of dealing with the sale of liquor seems to be as antagonistic as possible to this political canon.

If we mean by "government of the people" the promotion of law and order, we find that the liquor traffic is the great promoter of lawlessness and disorder.

Then assuming that Government should be "for the people" we soon discover that their prosperity, comfort and happiness suffer more from the liquor traffic than from any other single cause.

But it is when we come to "by the people" that we see even more glaringly how our liquor legislation is in direct contradiction to all sound Liberal policy.

Long ago it was discovered that the sale of strong drink was injurious to the community in which such sale was carried on, and the instinct of self-preservation led Government to sustain it within what was hoped would prove to be limits of safety.

But the experience of generations has proved that, however you may restrict or regulate the trade, you cannot alter its nature, nor escape from the evil effects which it produces.

Nevertheless, those to whom the exceptional privilege of dealing in intoxicants have been granted have so grown in wealth and influence that they have become a mighty political power, and a power which in almost all cases is exerted against the popular cause, and in favor of privilege and monopoly.

It becomes us, then, as Liberals to inquire how or by whom the exceptional privilege of drink-selling is given to those who desire to enter into that business.

The great army of drink-sellers (with very trifling exceptions) commissioned by the magistracy of the country.

The magistracy are drawn exclusively from what is called the upper classes.

They are not elected. John Stuart Mill described them as the most unconstitutional body still remaining amongst us.

To this magistracy we entrust the absolute power of instituting drink-shops in any district over which their jurisdiction extends.

Where they do not exercise this power total prohibition of the liquor "trade" exists.

Where they do exercise it there are at their discretion more or less drink-shops and more or less drinks, with all its attendant consequences.

It is contended that no body of irresponsible officials can safely be entrusted with such power, and the "popular veto" has been devised as a check upon their proceedings in those places where the local community object to a few of their neighbors being permitted to fill their pockets with the profits of a monopoly, which are secured through the cost and suffering of the surrounding districts.

It is proposed that, within certain prescribed areas (the size of which may be left to the wisdom of Parliament), a vote of the inhabitants should be taken as to whether they desired or not that the licensing authorities should exercise their powers in the said districts.

If a district should vote no license, then the Magistrates would be obliged to hold their hands, and no privileged monopolist would be able to pursue his calling there.

If, on the other hand, the district declines to vote no license, then the magisterial discretion as to persons and houses would remain unimpaired, and the Magistrates might if they please license as before any whom they selected to carry on the trade in the district in question.

"The popular veto" seems to provide the minimum of change in the law with the maximum of benefit from its adoption.

It is claimed by the supporters of the veto that it is an especially popular and democratic measure.

It gives the people themselves control in a matter which is at present entirely out of their hands.

It enables the masses to prevent the classes doing them a great injury, for every drink shop is a source of more or less evil to the surrounding neighborhood.

All this is so clear that even the unenfranchised Parliament elected in 1880 thrice endorsed its justice by passing resolutions in favor of the popular veto.

These resolutions have not yet fructified into legislation.

The two Parliaments which have been elected since the County Franchise was placed on a popular basis, have been intensely absorbed in the Irish question, and the supporters of monopoly in the liquor trade gladly availed themselves of this excuse to stifle for the present any legislation in this direction.

But the Irish question must go the way of all other questions, and be settled some how or other, and that before long.

Very many liberals, especially among the working classes, hold that this question of the drink veto is the very next

one which demands settlement by the representatives of the people. That settlement has been far too long delayed. The crime, the destitution, and the degradation of large numbers of our fellow-countrymen, can be traced clearly and unmistakably to the inflow of the liquor traffic.

That liquor traffic is maintained by the licensing system, which, as every one knows who has studied the subject, is a system of robbery and jobbery.

If the Liberal Government of the future does not attack this system in earnest, its liberalism will be of a very feeble nature.

But with a real Liberal Government in power, supported by the confidence of the working classes, the overthrow of this vile system must and will be accomplished.

If any better means for obtaining this end can be found than that of entrusting the people with the popular veto for their own convenience, let these means be produced and acted on.

If not, let us have the popular veto, and that without delay."

Drunkenness in Europe

WHAT FREE TRADE IS LIQUOR DOES

A Beer Drinking Country—Dramshops by the Hundred Thousand—An Awful Record of Poverty, Degradation and Vice.

THE FREER the liquor traffic, the more drink. The more drink, the more misery, wretchedness, and crime of every kind. These are facts that cannot be ignored, and of which every known civilized country is an illustration. It matters not whether the popular drink be whisky, beer, or wine, it inevitably produces degradation, vice, and crime. Belgium has for a long time been classed among the beer-drinking countries, and if it is to be taken as a fair specimen of the outcome of brewer's work, then every vestige of foundation is swept away from beneath the sunny theories of the Goldwin Smith's school of so-called temperance men.

A writer in the Weekly Review, which is published at Los Angeles, in California, speaking from personal observation, says: "Belgium appears to be the local centre of drunkenness and drunken poverty and misery. All drinks are free and untaxed there, and liquors of all kinds and tobacco are very cheap. It is a little country about twice the size of Los Angeles County and has 5,500,000 people. The drink there is beer, wine, and gin. In the year 1850 there were 63,097 dramshops; in 1870 there were 100,763; in 1875 there were 125,000 and now there are 140,000, more than half as many as in the whole United States. One dramshop for every 44 of the population, old and young! France has one for every 100; England one for 145; the United States one for every 280; the province of Ontario one every 600.

"Dramshops increase under low license high license, and free rum. It seems to make little difference. Those who drink this year will drink more next year, if it is to be had, and the children of drinkers drink earlier and more than their fathers, and become drunkards earlier if they drink at all. There is probably no instance of dramshops decreasing much in number, except where they are prohibited or where they have so thoroughly ruined a town or village that the people have all left or died, and then one or two deadfalls will stay to rob travellers.

"In 1870 the writer was some time in Belgium. The workingmen came on board ship to work every day loaded with private bottles of gin in addition to the denunciations brought by their bees. In a gang of 25 to 35 men one was detailed about all the time to serve out gin to the rest. Every day one or two men would be stretched out drunk and asleep somewhere, and there were a good many men more or less drunk always. When this was complained of the merchants said, 'Yes, we know it, it is always so, and we cannot help it. We have to give them gin right along or they would not work at all. It is a wretchedly annoying and expensive, but we cannot help it.

"Stories were told of horrible dens of iniquity in Antwerp, and public places of infamy where exhibitions of obscenity surpassed anything else of the kind in the world, except perhaps San Francisco. The Antwerp cathedral has in its tall spire probably the most perfect system of musical bells in the world. At intervals every day they pour forth over the infidel city the sweetest symphonies of heavenly music—but only a few steps from it is the filthy quarter called the Bag, famous the world over among sailors for its record of infamous vice and squalor.

"Never among the seaport people of the world did we ever see so many deformed, crooked, blinded, crippled, goggle-eyed, cross-eyed, idiotic-looking wrecks of men, never so many who looked as if they had been wrecked in a railroad disaster, blown up in a mine or steam engine, or escaped from a lunatic asylum. Never such a large proportion of drunken men among the workers. We were kept 12 days waiting with a splendid fair wind, a long March easterly gale, taking in some ballast which in any American seaport could have been put on board in 24 hours. And all because when 40 or 50 tons came alongside the men would go ashore and apes from one to two days before they would discharge it. And no men could be had to do otherwise.

"That was and is what a people, once among the most industrious, thrifty, honest, and capable in the world, have come to. And we have already a large class of people who are no better here. And unless we have prohibition we shall get where Belgium is.

The Canada Temperance Act.

RESULTS OF THE VOTING SO FAR:

Table with columns: PLACE, VOTES POLLED (For, Against), MAJORITIES, DATE OF ELECTION. Lists various Canadian locations and their voting results on the temperance act.

N.B.—In the preceding table a place that has voted more than once has the different votes indicated by the figures (1), (2), (3) after the name of place. Figures printed in italics are for first or second votes in places in which a later vote has been taken than that so printed. Names in heavy faced type are of cities, others of counties.

SUMMARY.

Nova Scotia has eighteen counties and one city, of which thirteen counties have adopted the Act.

New Brunswick has fourteen counties and two cities, of which ten counties and two cities have adopted the Act.

Manitoba has five counties and one city, of which two counties have adopted the Act.

Prince Edward Island has three counties and one city, all of which have adopted the Act.

Ontario has thirty-eight counties and union of counties and eleven cities, of which twenty-five counties and two cities have adopted the Act.

Quebec has fifty-six counties and four cities, five counties of which have adopted the Act.

British Columbia has five parliamentary constituencies, none of which have adopted the Act.

In all, up to the present time, 81 cities and counties have voted upon the Scott Act, and 63 have adopted it. Nine counties and cities voted twice and 3 three times, making an aggregate of 93 contests, out of which we have been victorious in 72.

The aggregate votes cast in all the contests have been:—

For the Scott Act..... 162408

Against "..... 112433

Net Scott Act majority..... 49975

If we omit all voting but the last, in those places which have voted more than once we get the following as the latest vote:—

For the Scott Act..... 147306

Against "..... 102493

44813

It is more than eight years since the Scott Act was first voted upon and adopted in different localities, and NO COUNTY OR CITY HAS YET REPEALED IT, although many votings have taken place on the question of repeal.

PREPARE THIS PAPER. YOU WILL NEED THIS TABLE FOR REFERENCE.

Literary Record.

THE ENGLISH HONORABLE title of an attractive little work, issued from the office of the Grip Printing and Publishing Company, Toronto. It is a compilation of the epigrams and humorous letters so well known to readers of Grip, and has been embellished by Mr. J. W. Bengough with a series of illustrations that, of themselves, would be enough to stir the imaginations of the most determinedly sedate. We congratulate the writer, the artist and the publishers on the success of their undertaking, and we recommend all our readers to send 25c for a copy and get a good, solid dollar's worth of fun.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS CO. of New York keeps up its regular issue of the standard English pictorial from which it derives its name. The American reproduction is fully equal to the original in every particular, and deserves even a wider circulation than that which it is rapidly building up. The number for January 7 contains a number of pictures of great attractiveness. They are too numerous to be referred to in detail. We recommend our readers to send 10 cents for a specimen copy to the Illustrated News Co., Potter building, New York.

WHY I JOINED THE NEW CRUSADE a Plea for the Placing of Taxes on Land Values only. By Richard T. Lancheild. An address delivered before the Anti-Poverty Society of Toronto. Every Christian, Moral Reformer, Philanthropist, Doubter and Disbeliever will be interested in the subjects touched on in this pamphlet. Price 10 cents.

THE JANUARY ISSUE of the British Workman has a front full page reproduction of the grand picture, "Faithful unto Death," painted by E. J. Poynter, R.A., and now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. It has been specially engraved to accompany a poem entitled "The Sentinel of Pompeii," contributed by Mr. Joseph Medina, and which tells of the soldier who died upright at his post when Pompeii was overwhelmed by the eruption of Vesuvius.

A NEW TEMPERANCE MAGAZINE.

THE International Good Templar is a handsome sixty-four page magazine edited by the literature committee of the Right Worthy Grand Lodge of the I.O.G.T., and published at London, Ontario. The first number, being that for January, has just come to hand, and is full of matter that will be of much interest to members of the Order. It contains an admirable portrait of Hon. J. B. Finch, with a brief biographical sketch by his wife, Mrs. F. E. Finch, a number of personal reminiscences by Dr. Oronhyatokka, choice poetry (original and selected), articles dealing with different phases of the temperance question in general and others referring to Good Templary in particular, an interesting news and announcement department conducted by the Right Grand Secretary, news from different parts of the field of fight, choice Good Templar music, admirable selections for the good of the Order, making a whole evening's first-class programme, a well-conducted editor's table department, and a vast amount of other matter of much interest make up a magazine worthy of the cause it represents, and that ought to have a very wide circulation. This number is made all the more attractive by some very fine wood engravings, including an interesting puzzle picture. If the first number is a fair forecast of what the International Good Templar will be, vast good to the Order must result from its publication. It will be an indispensable part of the equipment of every well-provided soldier of the great Good Templar army. It is worth remembering that the idea of the International organ of the Order originated with our late revered leader, and that the literary committee has in the results that lie before us, endeavored to carry out the wishes of one who may fairly be said to have given his life for the cause he so much loved.

BITS OF TINSEL.

Pastor—"Thomas, don't you think your parents would feel very sore if the knew you were fishing on the Sabbath?" Thomas—"Yes sir; but not as sore as I'd feel if they found it out."

A lawyer has just had a client acquitted who was accused of stealing a pair of spectacles. "My dear protector," says the accused, "I have no money to give you, but if you want the spectacles here they are."

Some one threw a head of cabbage at an Irish orator while he was making a speech once. He paused a second and said, "Gentlemen, I only asked for your ears; I don't care for your heads!" He was not bothered any more during the remainder of his speech.