

Prominent Topics.

Early Closing of Saloons.

The Early Closing by-law just passed by the Montreal City Council establishes a close season for alcoholic weaklings from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. from Monday to Friday; and from 7 p.m. on Saturday to 7 a.m. on Monday. This by-law, unlike the other Early Closing by-law which prevents the selling of a loaf of bread or a pound of sugar after 7 p.m. on two nights a week, has the merit of common sense and public interest. Ten o'clock at night is quite late enough for standing at the bar. To a large class of worthy people it will be a hardship not to be able to get a drink on Saturday nights after seven o'clock without buying a whole bottleful, but in the interests of the greatest good of the greatest number, these worthy people should be willing to make some personal sacrifice of comfort, to enable the wage-earner to escape the period of his greatest temptation. All temperance legislation, like all other legislation which interferes with the liberty of the subject, is attended with difficulties and requires the most delicate handling if it is not to do more harm than good. It requires more tact than is displayed by the rush of a bull at a gate. The new by-law is largely experimental. The closing of the licensed houses on Saturday nights will inevitably lead to the opening of unlicensed drinking places on a great scale. The last end may or may not be worse than the first. On this subject, nothing can be predicated with certainty. The experiment is at least worth trying.

The Referendum.

The Municipal Lighting Plant by-law has been approved by a majority of 365 of the electors—one for every day in this year of grace 1909, which does not happen to be a leap year. The total vote polled was insignificant, 2,055 out of a possible 20,000, but the result is not without significance, even if it has no practical importance for the present City Council. The popular verdict on the question of a municipal lighting plant will stand after the present Council has fallen; and the new Council will have all legal authority to go on with the scheme. The result of the referendum is attributed to the unpopularity of the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company. If the Company is well-advised, it will take time by the fore-lock and inaugurate a conciliatory policy towards the public. From present indications, it is unlikely that the present Council will attempt to do anything under the authority of the by-law. The new Council may feel differently about it.

The Late King of the Belgians.

The ancient, much over-worked and much misapplied motto: "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" is partly to blame for some of the essentially false eulogies which are being bestowed upon the late King Leopold. They are false in that they mini-

mize or suppress the discreditable facts which made up so large a part of his life. The simple truth is that as a man he was a bad man; and that as a monarch, while he showed considerable energy and ability in administering the government of Belgium, his administration of the Congo was the most atrocious scandal in the history of modern times. There is nothing to be gained for mankind by holding up such a character to public admiration simply because the man is dead.

Help Wanted.

For manufacturers to be fearing a labour famine, scarcely a year after a general shut-down policy was looked for by the pessimists, is rather remarkable. But of 463 manufacturers who answered the Canadian Manufacturers Association's query as to employment conditions no less than 156 wanted more help.

These 156 manufacturers say they require 5,962 employees, 2,254 male and 3,708 female. Of the 156 employers that need labour, 30 are in Quebec, and 116 in Ontario. Of the employees needed, 2,216 are by Quebec, and 3,502 by Ontario, says the report compiled.

In Ontario the list of manufacturers where more labour is required includes furniture, whitewear, boots and shoes, bookbinding, wollens, gloves, stoves, woodworking, knitting, radiator, carriage, biscuits, twine, pianos, electrical apparatus, furs, brushes, organs, garment, wire workers, harness, paper boxes, umbrellas, glass, hats, soap, automobiles, printing. There is also need of moulders, machinists and brass workers.

British Electoral Campaign.

The Unionist party in Great Britain is seriously handicapped in the present electoral campaign by so many of its leaders being placed hors de combat before the battle has fairly commenced. The greatest general of them all, Mr. Chamberlain, is permanently disabled from fighting; Mr. Balfour is ill; and the Lords, who include some of the most able debaters in the Kingdom, may feel debarred by constitutional etiquette from taking an active part in a campaign the issue of which may involve their own destruction.

London's Big Fire.

There was a disastrous fire at Clapham in southwest London on Monday, by which three people lost their lives, and the drapery store of Arding & Hobbs was totally destroyed, the damage being estimated at \$2,500,000. Such an event will cause far more interest in London than it would in any of the cities of this continent, barring none, on account of the happy infrequency of such calamities in the world's metropolis. With a population about equal to that of the whole of Canada, London has less to regret in the way of fire loss than many cities of comparatively insignificant status.