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PUBLISHERS' NOTES.

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DOMINION ALLIANCE.

TORONTO BRANCH.

Just previous to the rising of Parliament, the Toronto Branch of the Dominion Alliance held a well-attended meeting in Shaftesbury Hall, the Rev. John Smith in the chair. The following resolutions were carried unanimously, and copies of them forwarded to Sir John Macdonald and the Hon. Senator Vidal, President of the Dominion Alliance.—

1. That while not expressing any opinion upon or approval of the action of the Dominion Government in assuming the right to deal with the licensing question to the exclusion of Provincial Government and authority, we recognize that the draft of the Government bill as at present in the hands of the public contains many valuable provisions which commend themselves to all temperance reformers, and more particularly those clauses which would give effect to local option by giving the power to a majority of ratepayers of any district to prevent the granting of licenses.

2. That whereas clause 68 of the draft of the proposed liquor traffic bill provides that "no shop license shall be granted to any person to sell liquors in any store, shop, place or premises where groceries or other merchandise are sold or exposed for sale, or in any store, place or premises connected by any internal communication with such first-mentioned store, shop, place or premises," and whereas it has been reported through the city press that this enactment shall not take place until the year 1890, this meeting urges that there are the strongest reasons why such a concession should not be made to the present holders of shop licenses. To provide that grocers' licenses shall not be prohibited until 1890 will be to give a seven years' lease to the holders of such licenses, thereby recognizing a vested interest in the liquor traffic which does not exist by right, and would prevent the operation of public opinion, which is now in favor of the immediate repeal of all shop licenses, i. e., the total separation of the sale of liquor from other commodities.

QUEBEC BRANCH.

The regular monthly meeting of the Quebec Branch was held last week in this city. There were present Mr. T. S. Brown, President, Rev. R. Lindsay, J. H. Newnham, Messrs. J. R. Dougal, S. A. Abbott, H. Munro, J. A. Cayford, J. J. Maclaren, Q. C., S. A. Lebourveau, D. Tees, J. B. Fudger and the Secretary, the Rev. Mr. Gales. Mr. Robert Craig, G. W. P. Sons of Temperance, was introduced to the meeting and invited to participate in the deliberations. A response to an Alliance circular from the Presbyterian Synod of Montreal and Ottawa was read. The Secretary also read a special report upon legislation, which we give in full below:—

To the Executive:

In accordance with your instructions your Secretary proceeded to Ottawa immediately after the last monthly meeting, to place himself in communication with the members of the Alliance in Parliament and to watch the progress of the license bill prepared by a committee of the House of Commons. He made it his business to ascertain as fully as possible the views of the committee and to communicate with several members in reference thereto. There was a general and well-grounded feeling of disap-

pointment and annoyance at the prolonged delay in the introduction of the bill and the still longer delay in furnishing members of the Legislature and the country with a copy thereof after it had been submitted to the House. Sir John A. Macdonald moved the second reading of the Bill on Saturday, the 19th of May, and on the same day considerable progress was made in committee. Your Secretary, who was compelled by ill health to return home, went a second time to Ottawa. On Monday last, at 8.35 p. m., the Committee of the whole House resumed the discussion of the Bill, and continued until every clause had been considered and the Bill reported to the House at 4.35 on Tuesday morning—when the amendments were concurred in and the House adjourned. On motion for the third reading several amendments were proposed, some of which were adopted, others meeting a contrary fate. The Senate passed the Bill without amendment at the Governor-General gave his assent thereto in proroguing Parliament on Friday. The legislation has therefore been of a most hurried character, and it is not unlikely that it will, as Sir John said, "be the pleasing duty of the Legislature from time to time, as experience shows the necessity of it, to correct any errors in detail which may be revealed."

Your Secretary in presenting this report does not propose to enter fully into a description of the provisions of the Bill, but will endeavor to answer such questions as may be asked with a view to enable the Executive to obtain a tolerably correct knowledge of what has been enacted, and to put on record some expression in relation thereto.

Under three heads your Secretary gives his impressions regarding the Bill.

I. It is a remarkably comprehensive measure. Questions that in Great Britain and the United States are made subjects of special acts are here united in one general enactment.

The great principle of local option, or the right of the people to exercise control in reference to the granting of licenses, is recognized.

The prohibition of the sale of liquor on Saturday nights and throughout Sunday (except to bona fide lodgers at meals) is made the law in Canada.

The separation of liquor from groceries is practically declared to be wise and necessary legislation.

Liquor is not to be sold to minors under sixteen years of age at bars or steamships.

There is moreover a machinery for enforcing the law as well as the Scott Act and the Dunkin Act.

II. The Act recognizes the principle that diminished facilities for obtaining liquor are likely to diminish intemperance and its inevitable results.

Parliament has determined the maximum number of places for the sale of liquor, has provided for the reduction of the number in certain cases, has recognized several just grounds upon which it is the right and privilege of a place of public worship, hospital or school, or that the quiet of the place in which such premises are situate will be disturbed if a license is granted.

The Inspector is to furnish for the information of the Commissioners a report regarding each application—which among other things is to contain a statement in reference to the manner in which the house has previously been kept—the character of persons frequenting the house, its proximity to other licensed houses, whether the applicant is, in the opinion of the inspector, a fit and proper person to have a license, and whether the house or premises sought to be licensed, is or are in his opinion required for public convenience.

Applicants for license are required to enter into bond to Her Majesty for the payment of all fines and penalties which they may be compelled to pay in respect of any offence against the Act.

III. There are several admissions that the interests of the liquor sellers must be interposed with very cautiously if at all. In the judgment of your Secretary Parliament went too far in this direction, in view of the character of the traffic, and the fact that a license only gives the right of selling until it expires, when the contract ceases and may or may not be renewed as a regard for public interest may determine.

A clause requiring applicants for licenses to obtain the signatures of one-third of the electors in a given district was weakened by releasing present licensees from the requirement. In Hall's case the applicant must secure the names of a majority on his petition. A bill to amend the Act was introduced at the request of the signatories every year was brought before the Legislature at its last session, but received only five votes in its favor. We cannot therefore be surprised at the protest from Nova Scotia against the new bill, that appeared in the papers a few days since.

The local option clauses fall short of what was desired. Instead of the right of veto being given

to a majority, as is the case by Quebec law, the Act demands the signatures of two-thirds. Your Secretary heard the argument on this point and took special note of an allusion to a case with which this branch of the Alliance is familiar. One speaker announced his opinion that "if a place lost of such a character that it fairly becomes a nuisance to a locality, there can be no difficulty whatever in obtaining the signatures of two-thirds," whereas your Secretary knows that in the case of the Dorchester street saloon, whose license we ceased to be refused last year, it was, notwithstanding the fact that "the sense of the people was urged by an overwhelming majority," absolutely impossible to get the signatures of two-thirds of the electors within the required district, the overwhelming majority being largely made up of citizens who had a great interest in the success of the opposition, but whose signatures and efforts proved unavailing in 1880 and 1881, and who when the local opposition was attempted in 1882 were disqualified by residing beyond the bounds of the district. Your Secretary regrets that some members of the Alliance voted, as he thinks, contrary to the interests of temperance, i. e., to require two-thirds instead of a majority, as proposed in the Bill, but has no cause for any justification of the unreasonable reflections upon their honesty of purpose which found their way into newspapers from whom a more dignified treatment of the subject might have been expected.

The second local option part of the Act permits a majority of three-fifths in any municipal body to prohibit the traffic through a machine or exempt from the scope of the Scott Act. The original motion on this subject, conferring this power upon a majority, was carried in Committee, and changed to three-fifths on motion for third reading.

In the clause separating the liquor traffic from groceries Parliament has postponed to a period too far off the coming into effect of this important reform. There is no necessity to allow for a delay of this kind from this part of the Act, until 1890 in cities and towns, and 1887 elsewhere. It must, however, be remembered that the law prohibits and prevents the extension of the sale in connection with groceries, the deferring clause relates only to a licensee having a license at the time of the passing of this Act."

Your Secretary has not deemed it his duty to enter into the constitutional questions raised during the consideration of the Act.

On the whole the Act is a good one. The measure was not in any sense ours. Government declared their purpose to introduce it. The Alliance as in duty bound to its constituents, urged such points as in its judgment were for the interests of temperance. In this Province we were nobly supported by the Roman Catholic Bishops. Recommendations made were well received, and unquestionably influenced for good the legislation that has just been given to the country.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS GALES, Secy.
Montreal, May 29, 1883.

The foregoing report was approved by the meeting, and the thanks of the Branch passed to Mr. Gales for his services in connection with the bill. A resolution in reference to the new Act was discussed, and unanimously adopted in the form following:—

"That this Branch of the Dominion Alliance, without in any way committing itself or expressing an opinion upon the constitutional questions that have been raised in connection with the License Bill introduced and carried through Parliament during the session just closed, expresses satisfaction that the said Bill has become law, inasmuch as it provides more enforcing machinery than has ever before been put into our license laws, establishes a system of inspectorship which can be made available in localities where the Canada Temperance Act or the Dunkin Act is in force, embodies and recognizes the principle of allowing the persons most deeply interested and affected, namely, the inhabitants themselves, to prevent the traffic in very much smaller areas than the Canada Temperance Act applies to; abolishes all bars on vessels, and prohibits the sale every-where from seven o'clock on Saturday evening till six o'clock on Monday morning; prohibits the sale of liquor to minors under sixteen years of age, and separates liquor from groceries.

Whilst thus giving our approval to what in the Bill we consider excellent we must record our dissent from certain features, especially the following, which in our judgment are calculated to interfere with the practical efficiency of the law, viz:—

1. Requiring the friends of temperance and good order to secure the signatures of two-thirds of the voters in any locality in order to the prevention of a license, instead of a majority as is now the law in this Province. We find

the comparison involved in this clause by the different value set upon the suffrages of the better class of the community and upon those of the supporters of the liquor traffic in-ulting to that part of the voters which this Alliance represents.

2. The Act also makes it necessary that applications to license be renewed as often as applications are made, while an applicant having once obtained a license needs not obtain a renewal of the certificate in its favor. We find, also, that there is in this provision an acknowledgment of the altogether vicious principle of vested rights.

3. Postponing the bringing into effect the wise separation of liquor from groceries until 1890 in cities and towns, and 1887 elsewhere.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Gigault, M. P., for having taken charge of petitions from this Province, was passed, and the Branch also formulated its thanks to the other members of Parliament who endeavored to make the bill as satisfactory as possible in the interest of temperance. The Vigilance Committee was instructed to devise a system for having the new law carried out in Montreal. Regret was expressed that the Government did not amend the Scott Act in response to the requests from the Alliance and further that the question of appointing a Commission of Enquiry as to the relation of the sale of alcoholic liquors to the industry, the health and morals of the people of the Dominion did not come before Parliament. Committee on outside work reported that arrangements had been made to organize a County Alliance in Pontiac County, June 25th. It was also intended that the Secretary should visit several counties during the summer. An interesting communication from Argenteuil County, calling for speakers to assist at public meetings, was read, and the whole outside work for the ensuing month was referred to Rev. Mr. McCaul and the Secretary.

CAMPAIGN NOTES.

Temperance has made fine progress at Quio, a little village on the Upper Ottawa, within the past year. A branch of the Church of England Temperance Society, organized by the clergyman of that church officiating there last summer, aimed from the outset at prohibition. Its efforts were well seconded by the Roman Catholic priest, who induced many of his people to pledge themselves. The movement has had a triumphant issue sooner almost than its sanguine promoters hoped, the corporation having refused hotel licenses for the ensuing year, and passed a by-law prohibiting all retail selling during the same period. Order and quietness above the ordinary experience of the village has already been the result of these local regulations. Unfortunately, however, the residents have not the whole ordering of affairs in their own hands. A wholesale license has been granted to a shop in the village by the Quebec Government, and two unlicensed groceries just outside the corporation limits are plying their traffic under the eyes of a sleepy official with no one to stir him up.

A newspaper correspondent at Sackville, Westmoreland County, N. B., writes:—"Since the Scott Act Committee took proceedings lately against the liquor vendors, not a drop of rum is sold anywhere. It would even be a difficult thing to buy an empty bottle from those who have been victims of heavy fines."