

These provisions cover the same ground as do similar provisions of the Ontario Temperance Act, and therefore no doubt take precedence over the enforcement sections of that Act. Are we not re-opening at once the whole old difficulty of enforcement which existed in the Scott Act days in the province of Ontario, and inviting similar chaotic conditions?

Indeed, is there not grave danger of vexations and prolonged litigation involving these and other constitutional questions that will prevent the effective administration of the law so essential to good results from measures of this kind?

The Ontario Temperance Act, indeed the Provincial law in each province contains enforcement provisions, provides penalties and enforcement machinery particularly adapted to local conditions in the province to which they apply. If these are set aside and the provincial authorities are called upon to enforce an inferior and less suitable Dominion law which practically repeals their own legislation, will there be the same enthusiasm and earnestness in enforcement or as good results as would obtain were the provincial authorities working with their own laws, and using their own enforcement machinery?

Frankly, the Bill as it now stands does not seem to at all meet the need of the situation and even if passed by the Dominion Parliament is not such that any province would be likely to put it into force.

While the door would be shut closer in regard to the importation of liquor for beverage purposes, which will be a serious evil if war-time prohibition lapses, in other regards it would be thrown wider open. That together with the legal doubts that are involved would mean that we would probably lose on the one hand as much as we would gain on the other. The intention of the Bill is undoubtedly good, but the provisions seem to be faulty and impracticable.

This Bill could be very easily amended by simply making provision that would prohibit the shipment of liquor from any province into another province to any person not entitled by the laws of that province to sell the same.

The effect of this in Ontario would be that the only legal consignee of shipments of liquor would be the chief Government vendor of the province who would then have sole control of the distribution of liquor for permitted purposes within the province. The prohibitive, restrictive and enforcement provisions of the Ontario Temperance Act would then remain intact, and the work of administering the law greatly aided. Such an amendment would apply in an equally helpful way in every other province.

If this were done and provincial Governments were given direct power to bring the provisions of the Act into force in such a way as they might determine, then two main objections to the Bill would disappear.

Bill No. 26 as it now stands really is not adequate or satisfactory at the present juncture. It is not in harmony with the united and expressed desires of the temperance people of Canada. The cumbersome and tedious methods required for bringing its provisions into force might allow an interim for practically unhindered inter-provincial shipment of liquor. Even if, and when, brought into operation, it would be of doubtful value and might lead to prolonged legal wrangles upon constitutional issues to the detriment of effective enforcement.

Canada has led the world in progressive temperance legislation. Others are recognizing this

and following our example. Let us not now back-track. The Government and Parliament of Canada met the war emergency in a splendid way and have merited and commanded the confidence and respect, not only of Canadians, but of all allied well-wishers everywhere.

There are then two or three short paragraphs dealing with the merits of temperance; then the letter goes on to say:

Permit me to express the very earnest hope that even in the closing hours of the session Parliament will deal with this great question in a strong, meaningful way.

That letter is from the Rev. Benjamin Spence, and honourable gentlemen all know what position he occupies. In the light of that letter, are we in a position today to deal intelligently with this Bill?

I have another letter from the so-called Liberty League, which is composed of people who seem to have no rights, who are trying to say a word for themselves as best they may. That letter is as follows:

Citizens' Liberty League

Organized to oppose all Legislation, Dominion or Provincial, which tends to curtail the Liberties of the Citizen.

(Central Branch)

22 College Street,

Toronto, November 8, 1919.

To the Honourable The Senate,  
Parliament Buildings,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

The Citizens' Liberty League, representing members totalling in the Province of Ontario eighty thousand, with whom are affiliated large number of citizens all over the province who have not yet become members of the League, ask leave to present to you their petition to protest against Bills 26 and 27 now before the House of Commons, and which in due course will no doubt be before you for consideration, which legislation is being introduced for the purpose of preventing the manufacture and importation of liquor in any province where the majority of the electorate of that province on a plebiscite vote in favour of such prohibitory measures.

The Citizens' Liberty League was formed about five months ago, and the entire attention of the League has been taken up with the Referendum vote held on the 20th of October in the province of Ontario, and they had not before that date been able to devote the necessary time to the legislation above referred to, and which is before the House of Commons, or their protest against such legislation would have long since been lodged at Ottawa. Just so soon as the voting in Ontario was completed, the League succeeded in obtaining a conference with the Acting Premier, Sir George Foster, and on Friday, the 24th of October, the League asked the Acting Premier and the Honourable N. W. Rowell, President of the Privy Council, and the Hon. C. J. Doherty, the Minister of Justice, to appoint a committee of the House of Commons to hear the objections and arguments of the Citizens' Liberty League against the contemplated legislation. On Tuesday, the 28th of October, the League were notified in the following words by the Acting Premier:--