

The Camp Fire.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

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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, JANUARY, 1902

THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.

Three lines of action are now of pressing urgency. (1) Thorough organization of the prohibition forces. (2) Petitioning the Legislature for a prohibitory law. (3) Definite and strong protest against any unfair legislation by which a liquor-favoring minority should be allowed to retain the liquor traffic against the protest of a majority vote of the electorate.

We earnestly urge friends to take immediate action on all these lines. In other parts of this paper will be found further instructions as to methods of action and information as to suitable forms of petitions and protest.

PETITIONING

Petitions are pouring in to the Alliance secretary and the secretary of the Methodist Conference Committee for presentation to the Provincial Legislature. Already petitions have been received, signed by more than 20,000 persons, besides others from hundreds of organizations. This matter ought to be pushed with the utmost diligence. The Legislature is in session and there is no time to be lost. Petition forms can be obtained from the Alliance secretary, 52 Confederation Life Bldg.

A PROHIBITION PROVINCE.

On January 14th, the Supreme Court of the Province of Prince Edward Island delivered a judgment fully sustaining the Prince Edward Island Prohibition Law. The decision was based upon the judgment of the Privy Council declaring valid the Manitoba Liquor Act. It makes prohibition the law of every part of the Province not already under the operation of the Scott Act. At present it will only affect the city of Charlottetown. In conjunction with the Scott Act it completely outlaws the liquor traffic in Prince Edward Island for the whole extent of which prohibition is now in actual operation.

GOOD CONVENTIONS.

Mr. John A. Nicholls has sent to the Alliance office detailed and exceedingly interesting reports of organization work in different parts of Ontario, particulars of which we have not space to publish. Conventions were recently held as follows: On January 9th, at St. Catharines, for Lincoln and Welland; Jan 10th, Elmville, for Centre Simcoe; Jan 13, Fergus, for West Wellington; Jan 14th, St. Thomas, for East and West Elgin; Jan. 14th, Sarnia, for Lambton; Jan. 16th, London, for London City; Jan. 17th, St. Mary's, for South Perth. At all these meetings interest was great, attendance was good, and plans were laid for aggressive work in view of the present critical position of the prohibition movement and the now fast approaching Provincial election campaign.

THE SITUATION

The Ontario Legislature is now in session. In the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the session, prohibitory legislation was foreshadowed in a brief announcement that

a measure would be submitted relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors. No official intimation has yet been given as to the form of the legislation which the Government is expected to submit in fulfillment of often repeated promises to introduce legislation prohibiting the liquor traffic to the extent of the Province's ascertained power.

On January 3rd the Government received a large and influential deputation appointed by the Dominion Alliance Executive Committee, along with a deputation appointed by the Ontario section of the Temperance Committee of the General Conference of the Methodist Church. The representatives of both these bodies addressed the Government, briefly setting out the situation resulting from the majorities polled in favor of prohibition, the Government promises and the Privy Council decision.

In reply the Premier, Hon. G. W. Ross, promised careful consideration of the representation of the deputation. It is expected that a bill will be introduced in the House at an early date.

The whole matter of probable legislation has been vigorously discussed in the press and elsewhere. A great many persons have expressed themselves as in favor of having any legislation passed by the House submitted to the electors for ratification before going into operation. This method is generally spoken of as the "referendum." It is strongly opposed by some temperance workers and commended by others.

Some prominent citizens who have been interviewed by newspaper reporters have expressed themselves as favorable to the "referendum" plan. Others have opposed. A number of those who favor it have also expressed the opinion that there should be required something more than a bare majority of votes polled as a condition of a prohibitory law's going into operation. Generally speaking, this suggestion is viewed by temperance people as exceedingly unfair, and has been condemned in the strongest terms by nearly all active temperance workers.

The General Conference Temperance Committee and the Dominion Alliance have sent out blank forms of petitions to the Legislature praying for the enactment of a prohibitory law according to the promises of the Government. These petitions are being signed and presented to the Legislature in great numbers. It is a movement that is already making its influence felt and ought to be prosecuted with the utmost diligence.

The situation is intensely interesting and important. Prohibitionists are waking up to its possibilities and perils. Wisdom, determination and energy are needed. The immediate, urgent duty of friends of our cause is thorough organization so that they will be ready for any emergency that may arise.

A REFERENDUM.

A number of recently published newspaper articles and statements made by some prominent citizens express the opinion that a prohibitory law enacted by the Ontario Legislature should require ratification by a popular vote before being put into operation. Some of these have also declared that such legislation should not be put into operation unless sustained by a very large proportion of the votes polled. Two-thirds of the polled vote has been mentioned by some parties. Most of those who favor a large fixed majority, advocate three-fifths, or sixty per cent. of the polled vote as what ought to be required.

There ought to be absolutely no necessity for any further expression of opinion by the people to convince the Government and Legislature that public opinion is in favor of prohibition. The majorities already recorded against the liquor traffic are sufficiently strong to warrant thorough-going legislation. Logically, there is no need for another vote.

If, however, the Government and Legislature should insist upon submitting for popular ratification whatever legislation is passed, we

shall be compelled to rally again as we have done before, for a demonstration of our strength. We can win in such a contest if it is conducted under conditions that have in them any reasonable fairness.

There ought to be, however, the strongest protest made by prohibitionists against the unjust and unreasonable proposal that in such election, unless the prohibitionists win by a very large majority, the other side should be counted triumphant. If there is to be any discrimination it ought not to be against the unselfish forces that are working for the uplifting of humanity. There ought to be no unfair advantage given to the selfish interests whose operation is cursing the whole community. The proposal to handicap temperance workers by allowing two liquor-favoring votes to count for as much as three temperance votes, would be such favoritism towards the liquor traffic as we hope no legislative body in this country would dare to express.

There seems, however, to be some danger. Prominent citizens, no doubt thoughtlessly, have expressed approval of the unfair suggestion. Members of the Legislature who fear the liquor traffic may be inclined to seize upon this proposal as a sort of compromise between enacting prohibition and doing nothing. The situation demands effort to resist vigorously a proposal that has already received some unexpected endorsement.

Every friend of the prohibition cause ought to do all he can to secure at this crisis a definite expression of condemnation by prohibitionists of a plan so mischievous and dangerous. Resolutions denouncing it ought to be adopted by public meetings, church congregations, and temperance societies. Letters from friends should warn members of the Legislature of the folly of such a course.

Lovers of justice and supporters of the temperance reform ought to let it be definitely understood that legislation giving the liquor traffic an undue advantage must be considered as legislation against the prohibition movement and for the benefit of the liquor traffic.

THE DEVIL THAT WAS IN HIM.

The father was a surgeon. He was charged with cruelty to his three children. His little boy, Harold, five years of age, spoke of his father having thrashed him with his walking-stick, causing his head to bleed. His father, he added, burnt his hair with matches, knocked the tobacco from his pipe on his head, burnt his fingers on the bars, spat in his mouth, and knelt on him. The daughter Eleanor, ten years of age, said that her father was always drunk when cruel. She had seen him spit on the baby's face, drag her out of bed, and throw her on to the bed. Twice he bit the baby's face, making marks on it. Both children said that their father was kind when sober.—The Children and the Drink.

THE DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

There can be no doubt as to the duty imposed upon the Government by the present position of the temperance cause. The facts of the case are simple.

In 1894 a vote of the Provincial electors and of the women who are municipal voters, in the Province of Ontario, resulted in a majority of 84,908 in favor of prohibition. The majority of men's votes polled was 74,732.

In view of this great majority the then Premier, Sir Oliver Mowat, promised to a deputation of prohibitionists that he would promote prohibitory legislation to the limit of the jurisdiction of the Provinces as soon as the extent of that jurisdiction was ascertained. The courts were then considering a series of questions, the answers to which were expected to make clear the extent of Provincial power. The terms in which Sir Oliver Mowat gave his pledge were the following:

"If the decision of the Privy Council should be that the Province has the jurisdiction to pass a prohibitory

liquor law as respects the sale of intoxicating liquor, I will introduce such a bill in the following session, if I am then at the head of the Government.

"If the decision of the Privy Council is that the Province has jurisdiction to pass only a partial prohibitory liquor law, I will introduce such a prohibitory bill as the decision will warrant, unless the partial prohibitory power is so limited as to be ineffective from a temperance standpoint."

Hon. A. S. Hardy, who succeeded Sir Oliver Mowat as Premier of Ontario, declared his adhesion to the promises and policy of Sir Oliver Mowat. Hon. G. W. Ross, the present Premier, who succeeded Hon. Mr. Hardy, has taken the same position. When Sir Oliver Mowat's promise was given, Hon. Mr. Ross endorsed it in the clearest and most emphatic terms.

Another vote of the electors taken in September, 1898, resulted in the polling of a majority of 39,214 votes in favor of prohibition.

The Ontario Government held that the jurisdiction of the Province was not clearly defined in the answers given by the courts to the questions which were under consideration when Sir Oliver Mowat's promise was made. Since that time, however, a comprehensive measure of prohibition has been enacted by the Legislature of Manitoba, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which is the court of last resort in the British Empire, has declared that prohibitory law to be within the power of a Provincial Legislature.

This decision clears the way for the fulfilment of the promises of the Ontario Government. The Government's duty is unmistakable. That duty is the introduction into the Legislature of a bill to prohibit the liquor traffic in Ontario.

A NEW ACT FOR THE NEW YEAR

The Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) Act which comes into force with the New Year is regarded by most temperance reformers as the only signal achievement of the last session of the British Parliament. It is the outcome of an honest attempt to get rid of a serious blot on our civilization. The sight of young children running in and out of the worst public-houses on errands for their parents is not pleasant. The little ones cannot fail to be affected injuriously by what they see and hear. But it is doubtful if the new law, which is only another plaster on a deep-rooted sore and which will cover up instead of eradicating, will do all the good which its most ardent supporters, who have termed it the Children's Charter, expect from it. The Act, moreover, only affects the poorest classes, who obtain beer on draught, or who get small quantities of whiskey. The artisan may, as before, send a child of any age for a bottle of beer or a pint of whiskey. All that is needed to evade the law is a bottle and a cork. Indeed, the bill, in the course of its migrations through the houses of Parliament, got so clipped and carved that it might not inappropriately be termed an Act for the abolition of the beer mug. The duly corked bottle, with all its fiery contents, has now become the token of conformity to a law which is regarded as a great temperance reform.

SOME GOOD ADVICE.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., has contributed a helpful and interesting series of hints to aspirants to journalism in the January "Royal Magazine." He emphasizes two aids to success in newspaper work. "I would say to the young journalist," he writes, "that he ought to cultivate athletics, for his work is often sedentary, and it requires great resolution to take up constant exercise. Trained, however, to athletic exercise in youth, the middle-aged man will be glad to find some excuse for that life in the open air which is the best preservative of health. And let me whisper this word finally in your ear. It won't do you the least harm if you are a teetotaler. You may lose something, but you gain tenfold. I believe in half-a-century from now no man will rise to the height of any profession in the field, in the forum, or at the desk, who is not a teetotaler. And I could tell tales of journalists—but that is not my business now."