

# The Camp Fire.

A. MONTHLY JOURNAL  
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF  
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

Edited by F. S. SPENCE  
ADDRESS . . . TORONTO, ONT.

Subscription, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS a Year.

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, APRIL, 1898

## IT IS COMING

The Plebiscite Bill has not yet been introduced into Parliament. The long delay that has occurred has led to some expressions of fear that it is going to be again left over. There is not much danger of such a contingency. The Government is fully committed to the taking of a vote. It has been definitely promised that a bill will be presented to Parliament during the present session. Other matters of urgency have been occupying the attention of the legislators, but most of them are now out of the way. The Franchise Bill, which was supposed to be a necessary antecedent of the plebiscite measure, has been adopted by the House of Commons. We confidently look for the promised legislation at a very early date. More anxiety exists relating to the form which the proposed plebiscite will take.

## A STRAIGHT ISSUE.

The Liberal party promised to take a plebiscite upon prohibition, if placed in control of the Government of Canada. That promise was a prominent plank in the platform upon which the party secured a majority in the House of Commons.

There was no doubt in the minds of the people as to what was intended. The public expected that voting would take place in which the electors would be asked to mark their ballots for or against the enactment of a prohibitory law. Of course the voting for prohibition implies a willingness to accept the condition and results of prohibitory legislation.

It is expected that some of these results will be gratifying to every right-thinking citizen. A lightening of public burdens, an improvement in public health, promotion of general prosperity and a lessening of pauperism, disease and crime are among the benefits which we hope will come from the suppression of the sale of intoxicating beverages. These advantages must be won at the cost of some sacrifice. Diligent efforts must be made to secure a thorough enforcement of the law. For a time no doubt taxation must be increased in some other direction. Parliament is, however, already committed to the declaration that the prohibition policy is right, and that the advantages are such as to warrant the proposed legislation.

The benefits are as necessarily related to the proposed legislation as are the other anticipated results. Some enemies of prohibition, however, conceived the idea that an advantage to the liquor

party would result from having special attention called in the ballot paper to one of the least desirable consequences. The liquor party has asked that the ballot shall call attention to the probable increase of taxation and that the public shall be specifically asked whether or not they desire this increase.

It is not anticipated that the people will go to the polls in ignorance regarding any aspect of the question of prohibition. It will have been discussed on the platform, and in the press. Every possibility of its consequences will have been canvassed. Some of the voters may hold different opinions as to whether the advantages or disadvantages will be the greater. This is, however, no reason why the ballot should discuss the one or the other.

It must be distinctly borne in mind that the proposal to complicate the question of prohibition with the question of taxation in the ballot to be used, is a proposition made by the liquor party for the purpose of giving their side a special advantage in the voting. We cannot believe that the Government will be unwise enough or unjust enough to listen to the special plea of those who are simply selfishly striving to have the liquor traffic continued.

## ORGANIZATION.

While we are waiting for the enactment of the Plebiscite Bill which will be the signal for the commencement of the fight, we should not fail to wisely use this opportunity for thorough organization. Our success in the coming struggle will depend largely upon the systematic management of our work. The people must be thoroughly quickened and informed. Thoroughness is impossible without method.

Many counties have already their committees formed and their plans laid. Others have yet done nothing in this direction. They are waiting for some special lead, for someone to devise some exceptionally perfect plan. This is unwise delay. It is better to work in the worst way than to do nothing. No one should wait for another. Whoever feels the need of the occasion should make a beginning.

There is wisdom and knowledge enough in almost any community now to ensure effective plans and methods. It is of course well to have as far as possible the same principles and ideas underlying organization in different parts of the country. To aid in this the Alliance Secretary will promptly and cheerfully furnish suggestions with forms of constitution, etc., for both local and county organizations, to any friends of the cause who will apply.

## AVOID IMPATIENCE.

Some temperance bodies have been discussing the desirability of refusing to take part in the Plebiscite, if there should be submitted a question so complicated with other issues as to prevent a fair expression of public opinion upon prohibition. Any such action would be decidedly premature. Even if there were a strong probability that the ballot to be used be in some desirable form it would be improper to say what course of action should be taken until the form of ballot had been seen and considered. We are strongly hopeful that the Government will not present the question in such form as to unjustly handicap people in the voting. As soon as the Bill is introduced into Parliament there will be held a conference of representative prohibitionists, who will carefully consider its provisions and watch its progress through Parliament. On that

committee are leading representatives of religious denominations and heads of provincial temperance bodies. The whole question will be carefully considered and any declarations that it is deemed desirable to make will be before the public without delay.

## GETTING READY.

The prohibitionists of Canada have accepted the wise conclusions worked out by the Dominion Alliance Council last July, when it was clearly shown that the management of the Plebiscite campaign would have to be, to a great extent, provincial in its character. The Plebiscite will probably be taken under the new Dominion Franchise Act. In this case the franchise will vary somewhat in the different provinces. All the details of work can only be perfectly arranged by those who are familiar with local conditions.

Organization is under way in every part of Canada excepting the Pacific Province, and it is anticipated that British Columbia will soon also be ready for her share in the contest. When the Plebiscite Bill has been passed the Alliance Council will name a Plebiscite day which will form a starting point for special campaign activity in every part of the Dominion.

## THE KLONDIKE.

Canada is stirred over the serious peril of the liquor-traffic's activity in the great Yukon country, where men of all classes are now gathering in a rigorous climate, under exciting circumstances, and away from contract with the institutions and agencies that absorb attention in the intervals between the long hours of arduous toil. Liquor is dangerous everywhere, but in mining communities it is found to be most productive of lawlessness, death and demoralization of every kind.

The Dominion Parliament has been stormed with petitions and appeals to prevent the introduction of liquor into the new country. Beverage sale of intoxicants there is absolutely inexcusable. Yet permission to take in liquor has been given by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Territories with a recklessness that is appalling. Last year a return recently laid before the House of Commons shows that last year from May 5th to August 30th inclusive, permits had been given covering 17,737 gallons of spirits and that all the quantities were not reported.

The Government is alive to the danger that exists. Of course the wealthy and greedy liquor traffic will use every possible argument and influence to secure permission to continue its deadly work. Friends of temperance must not slacken their efforts. The Government should be given to understand fully that the Christian temperance sentiment of the country will sustain them in the most extreme measures that they find necessary to take in dealing with this serious evil.

## THE SALOON IN POLITICS.

From an able sermon recently preached in St. Ann's Church, Montreal, by Rev. Father Cavanagh, S.J., of Loyola College, we clip the following paragraphs, and cordially commend them to the careful consideration of the friends of temperance, who are, we fear, paying too little attention to the growing and dangerous influence that the liquor traffic is exercising in political affairs:

"The saloons are almost everywhere. There is not one of you but must unfortunately know too many who are sad victims of intemperance. Among these

there must be at least one of whom you once thought it impossible that he should ever be the slave of drink. He used to be as well conducted, as strong of will, as you are now. You have been wise in your own interest to hedge yourselves round with the safeguards of your temperance pledge. But besides the personal motive you, who have such power for good, should exert that power.

"Let us be practical, and see what we can do. There is plenty of opportunity for good work, for there is a lot to be done. Think of it; there are four hundred licensed saloons in the city of Montreal alone. These are four hundred agencies working against you. The saloon keepers have organized themselves into the Licensed Victuallers' Association, with an organ of their own, *The Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*. They are very much in earnest and closely watch whatever affects their interests. They take a very active, a very telling part in municipal and even in national politics.

"Compared with this, what are you doing? You know that the saloon keepers are a power in politics. What would the chances of a candidate in St. Ann's Ward be, if the saloon keepers were to pronounce against him? But, if you men were, as you must be, just as much and as practically in earnest as they are, you, and not they, would decide and give the seat to whom you pleased. Then do, for God's sake and for the sake of your neighbor, only one-half as much as is done by the enemy.

"Teach your political party, if necessary, that the men who are working in the cause of humanity are to be reckoned with. Insist on a wisely restrictive legislation as regards the sale of intoxicants. At best it is a dangerous trade. Gunpowder and dynamite cannot be stored indiscriminately. Dangerous substances cannot be sold even by druggists otherwise than under certain assurances. Therefore, the selling of drink which leads so often to madness and crime, and is the cause of many a broken heart, should be compassed round with even greater guards and guarantees.

"Bring your unquestioned power to bear. Stand for temperance always and everywhere. Make your influence felt in elections. See that the names of good men are registered on the voters' list. Make yourselves a power in the land. Then success will crown your worthy efforts; you will have done a noble, a holy and a patriotic work, and God, who has promised the recompense for a cup of cold water given in his name, will reward and bless you here and hereafter forevermore."

## ALCOHOL AND THE DEATH-RATE.

Some interesting information is given by Mr. William Bingham, of the Sceptre Life Assurance Company, on the practice of insurance offices as to the lives of publicans. Eight offices consider the risk too unfavorable, and decline to except this class of life. The Prudential used to charge an extra premium of £1 ls. per cent., but about a year ago this was raised to £2. consequent on the unfavorable experience of the office in this class of lives. At first these lives were taken at the ordinary rates, then after disastrous results, about twenty-three years ago the company restarted with an extra premium of 15s., afterwards raised to £1 ls., and finally to £2. In other offices from 5s. up to 30 per cent. on the premium; but the majority charge £1 ls. There is only one at the highest figure, one adds seven years, one charges 7 per cent., another £2 2s. It is somewhat remarkable that the same class of life should be weighted with such widely-differing rates of extra premium. This looks as if each office had rated according to its own experience. As to licensed grocers, whose rise in mortality was commented on by Dr. Farr shortly after grocers' licenses were instituted, it is most remarkable that two offices rate their extra at 10s. per cent., and one office at 15s. As the publican alone among traders has to produce evidence of good character, and is generally well housed, clothed, and fed, the offices must consider the mortality risks very high to demand such extra premiums, and some even to absolutely decline to accept such lives at all.—*The British Medical Journal*.