

SALES OF LIQUOR ACT.

1.—ABOLITION OF THE BAR

When Hon. Walter Scott, at Oxbow on March 18th, 1915, announced the policy of his government in closing the public bars and abolishing the private retailing of intoxicating liquors in Saskatchewan, there were some who openly questioned the right of the government to take so far reaching a step without a special mandate from the people of Saskatchewan, and the action of the government was even considered by some who approved of the closing of the bar to be somewhat drastic and to savour of autoeratic methods. It is generally recognised, however, that even in democratic government there must be leaders, and there is now general approbation of the government's action by nearly all except those who were formerly interested financially in the licensed sale of liquor as the main business of our hotel system. And now that Saskatchewan has been without the bar for nearly one and a half years, and has realised the beneficial effects of the change there is not the slightest chance of any substantial body of public opinion favoring its return.

2.—WHOLESALE LIQUOR STORES.

When the government's policy regarding the liquor traffic was announced it was desired to get immediate results in the curtailment of the liquor traffic and so the bars, which numbered 406, were closed. There were at that time, however, thirty-eight wholesale liquor stores privately owned and operated. To overcome the objection of persons who regarded the action of the government, respecting the bar, as arbitrary and unwarranted, it seemed advisable to allow the wholesale liquor traffic to remain until the benefits from the closing of the bars should be apparent. The question then arose as to whether or not this remnant of the liquor business should be in private hands or administered under the strictest public control. The decision was in favor of the latter, and twenty-three stores for the sale of liquor in sealed packages were established in twenty places in 1915. Three were closed as a result of the vote of December 1915. And now the voters of Saskatchewan having had a reasonable time to consider the effect of the government's action in closing the bar are being given an opportunity to say whether they wish the government to abolish the remaining liquor stores as well.

3.—THE ACT.

The Act is divided into six parts, namely: organisation and administration; books of account and finance; prescriptions; enforcement; submission to the electors and miscellaneous. As the people of Saskatchewan will be asked in 1916 to decide whether the present system of liquor stores is to be continued, it may be desired by some of the electors to have an explanation of the system and for this a study of the Sales of Liquor Act is necessary. Many, however, will only be interested in the Sections relating to the referendum as to