

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, JULY, 1899

CANADA.

There is reason for fervent thankfulness in the advanced position which Canada occupies in the matters of temperance habits and prohibitory law. Part of a statement prepared for another purpose, is reprinted in this paper under heading, "Liquor Laws of Canada." It contains information not known to all our readers and will be of interest to every advocate of moral reform.

THE DOMINION COUNCIL.

The Council of the Dominion Alliance will hold its annual session in Toronto on July 12th. Already credentials have been received from a great number of provincial temperance organizations and representative ecclesiastical bodies. A year ago thirty four of these organizations were represented at the Council Meeting. It is likely that this year there will be even a more representative gathering.

It is earnestly requested that every church and temperance body will bear in mind the importance of this gathering, and that all delegates will make it a special duty to attend. All the wisdom and zeal that can be mustered at this serious crisis in the history of moral reform, in Canada.

Delegates to this Convention are cordially invited. The Provincial meeting to be held on the preceding day, particulars of which are given on the front page of this paper. They may obtain return tickets on the reduced rate plan provided for delegates to that Convention.

SHALL THE PEOPLE RULE?

In the Plebiscite campaign the liquor traffic did its best. It spent money freely. It appealed to unworthy prejudices. It strove to rouse race feelings. It used every device that desperation and dishonesty could suggest. Yet the liquor traffic was beaten. The electors it prejudiced and the electors it bought were not enough to equal the earnest honest men who marked their ballots in condemnation of the traffic. The traffic was beaten and the people won.

The Government has taken sides against the people. It has refused to embody in legislation the principles that the electors have endorsed at the polls. Apart from the merits of the case, the Government ought to represent the majority of the people. Apart from the majority of the people the Government ought to represent the side of progress

and right. The Government allies itself with the traffic, to thwart the popular will and stands on the side of the minority and the wrong.

By its action the Dominion Government has forced into politics the question of whether the law is to be in favor of the minority and the wrong, or on the side of the majority and the right. It looks as if we must fight again at the ballot box the question of whether or not the people have a right to rule.

DELAY AT OTTAWA.

The resolutions of which Mr. Flint has given notice, have not yet been discussed in the House of Commons. The session is now so far advanced and the pressure of parliamentary business is so great, that these resolutions can only have full consideration by consent of the Government.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has promised that a day will be set apart for the question, after the re-distribution bill has been disposed of. It is evident that Members of the House of Commons do not look upon the prohibition question as one of great importance. It is made secondary to matters which have not certainly so intimate relation with either the material or moral prosperity of the country. If Parliament fairly reflects the views of the electorate, then our people are lacking in earnestness and enthusiasm. If the apathy of Parliament is not shared in by the electors, then our friends ought to make a strong effort to rouse their representatives to understand that their indifference is dangerous, and that their constituents expect them to deal with this issue promptly and definitely.

The division list upon Mr. Flint's resolution, and any amendments that may be moved, will be carefully watched, and will no doubt influence a vast number of votes at the next general election.

THE DEFEAT IN BROME.

On June 20th, the Scott Act was repealed in the County of Brome, P.Q., by a majority of 532. This startling result of a closely fought election, after twenty-five years of prohibition, is of special interest, and demands careful consideration.

It is freely and no doubt truthfully stated that improper practices on the part of the liquor traffic, prevailed largely in the contest, that many votes were bought. This, however, is not a sufficient explanation of the change. The men who voted for prohibition are not the class that can be bribed. We only count upon success for the temperance cause by a majority of the whole vote, taken entirely out of the part that is honest and high-principled.

About twenty-five per cent. of the electorate of Brome is French-Canadian. Here in all probability is the secret of the change. In the Plebiscite campaign, scheming politicians diligently sought to convince the French people that prohibition was something that would interfere with the influence that French Canadians have in public affairs to-day. They voted against prohibition to save Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Government from overthrow. They were made enemies of prohibition by the men who sought to array race against race, and to make it appear that Liberalism and prohibition were opposed. This not doubt the secret of the liquor triumph in the County of Brome.

THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE.

The present Government of Canada is not merely the administrative body

which superintends the carrying out of national legislation and the detail work of national government. It is also the mouthpiece of the great Liberal Party whose policy the Government was elected to carry out.

No one will deny the fact that in the last general election the people of Canada went to the polls with a definite understanding that the Liberal Party favored the taking of a Plebiscite on the question of prohibition, and favored the enactment of a prohibitory law if the Plebiscite should show that the people so desired. The Plebiscite did make that showing, far more definitely and emphatically than the ballot boxes in 1896 showed that the people desired the Liberal policy to prevail.

Placed in power with a strong party behind them, with the voice of the people unmistakably in favor of prohibition, the Government has taken upon itself the responsibility of failing to carry out the policy which the Liberal Party advocated, and refusing to the people the legislation for which they voted. If the liquor traffic is jubilant to-day, if friends of moral reform are thwarted in their work, if evil flowing from intemperance continues rampant and fearless in the land, if law that ought to be on the side of right upholds what is degrading and wrong, the responsibility must rest with the Government.

It is no excuse to say that the vote for prohibition was small. Outside of Quebec the vote for prohibition was very, very large. The majority was such as had never before been recorded in relation to any action or measure. This mighty vote cannot be ignored. The Government is acting unwisely as well as unjustly, and is inviting the opposition of all who favor justice and progress.

TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES.

The International Supreme Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars, in session in Toronto at the time this article is written, is an object lesson on the value of organization. Representatives are present from different nations in both hemispheres, speaking on behalf of constituencies aggregating over 500,000 membership. An increase during the past year is reported. Thorough organization and earnest work have made this Order a mighty power for good in every part of the civilized world.

Organization and work are the watchwords of this institution. Organization and work have in an incredibly short time made Good Templary a mighty power. Thorough organization and hard work are the secrets of success in any moral reform enterprise.

On July 12th, the National Division of the Sons of Temperance will hold its annual session at Niagara Falls. To it will come delegates from nearly every part of Canada and the United States. Here will be another example of the results of wise planning and earnest effort.

We wish our brothers of the I.O.G.T. and our brothers of the S. of T. every success. They are engaged in a glorious work that must result in the overthrow of the evil which they assail. These and kindred societies began the great prohibition crusade which has since been taken up by churches and other agencies. No movement ever inaugurated made so much progress in so short a time. Unless some sudden catastrophe should stay the wheels of progress it cannot be long before we shall see, in this country at least, the total overthrow of the liquor traffic against which so effective a warfare is being waged.

Selections.

"IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE DRINK."

BY A. L. WESTCOMBE.

'Tis close upon the midnight chimes, the fire is burning low,
My eyes are blinded so with tears, I cannot see to sew;
I'm faint and hungry, and I fain would eat a crust of bread,
But I must leave it till the morn, for the children must be fed.
I sent them early to their bed, their hunger to forget,
And stole to see them as they slept, but still their cheeks were wet.
I little thought five years ago, that we to this should sink—
And we might all be happy still if it was not for the drink!

We have but rags upon us now, our clothes are all in pawn,
Yes, one by one the things I had for rent and food are gone.
There's nothing but my shadow now across the empty space,
Where our old clock stood, year by year, with round and cheery face;
I used to like to hear it tick, and see the hour draw on,
That brought my Joe again to me, when his day's work was done;
But when I hear his footsteps now, my heart begins to sink,—
Yet he would still be kind and good if it was not for the drink!

My Lizzie, with the flaxen curls, and eyes so large and blue,
I'm thankful that your mother's lot can never rest on you.
There seemed no bitterness in death as I stood by your grave,
The heavenly Shepherd had stooped down the weakest lamb to save.
You'll never cry again, my child, with hunger or with cold,
For weeping is not heard within that city all of gold;
Yet still I miss your little face, and tears fall as I think
I might have had you with me still if it was not for the drink!

Oh! sometimes when I'm sitting here, I wish that I were dead,
And resting in the quiet grave my weary heart and head;
But then I look around upon my Johnnie and my Kate,
And call the wish back as I think of what would be their fate.
Without my hands to wash and mend, without my hands to strive
To earn a little bit of bread to keep us just alive.
For it's very, very seldom now I hear Joe's wages clink:
Though he would bring them all to me if it was not for the drink!

Ah me! it is a bitter grief to feel one's love and trust
Have leaned upon a broken reed, and built upon the dust!
This bruise is sore—but oh! my heart is sorer still to know,
And try to hide, whose hand it was that gave that cruel blow;
For the drink has got such hold on Joe, he can't tell wrong from right:
He's dark and sullen in the morn, but worse, far worse, at night;
And wicked words he often says, that make me start and shrink,
But they would never pass his lips if it was not for the drink!

I feel ashamed to go to church, though a comfort it would be,
But folks would think I came to beg, if they my rags should see.
'Tis very long since I have had a gown, that was not old,
My bonnet has been soaked with rain, my Sunday shawl is sold;
And so I have to stay at home, and silently to pray
That God would pity my poor Joe and take his sin away:
While he sits sleeping heavily, without the power to think,—
Yet he would think and he would pray if it was not for the drink!

It makes me mad to see the man who sells him drink go by,
With glittering rings and chain of gold, holding his head so high.
'Tis hard to see his wife and girls in silks and satins shine,