

EVENTS

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The Situation in Ontario.

TWO provincial conventions have been called to meet in Toronto next week, the Liberals on the 23 and the Conservatives on the following day. Mr. Whitney has issued a "manifesto" calling on the electors to vote for clean, decent, and honest government. Premier Ross says that he has given the province good, decent government, and that the Whitney party ain't fit to govern. The people have to soon make a choice.

It is proposed to raise a most important and far reaching issue in the contest. It is suggested that Mr. Ross should pledge his government if returned to power, to pass a law prohibiting the sale in Ontario of intoxicating liquor, with a clause empowering any municipality to over-ride this general law and issue licenses, as at present. This is practically a Scott Act measure applied the other way on. Under the Scott Act any municipality could adopt prohibition for itself; under the suggested law any municipality could adopt a license law for itself. The experience of the Scott Act in Ontario shows that such a hybrid system cannot be enforced and

only brings discredit on the administration of law in the Province.

The principle or practice of temperance is one that recommends itself to everybody. The principle of coercive legislation called total prohibition has never been a success in free communities. At present we have in Ontario a law which prohibits the sale of liquor except during certain hours, and on Sundays absolutely. There is also absolute prohibition during election days. All the time each person can be a prohibition law unto himself. He can either practice total abstinence or temperance. The intemperate will somehow or other get liquor if it is in the vicinity. If one municipality votes to accept the proposed general law, and the adjoining municipality to exempt from it then the intemperate of the first will get his supply from the second. He will also get it in the worst form and in the worst way. There will be numerous middlemen anxious to make the enormous profits that are always to be made out of adulterated, cheap liquor and without the onus of a license or general expense of a licensed concern. These po-