

The Wayside Philosopher

ABRACADABRA.

All legal responsibility assumed by author.

FROM THE COURTS.

Whither are we drifting? When a Judge of our Supreme Court Bench, discharging his judicial duties in a most serious criminal case, in his judicial charge to a jury refers to certain witnesses as a "sweet scented bunch of jailbirds" there is a regrettable lack of dignity in his diction. Could one imagine a learned judge in Britain charging a jury in such language? By the way, why "sweet scented"? and why "a bunch?" It may be the jury understood this portion of the charge. Juries sometimes do strange things.

PROHIBITION.

The Prohibition referendum resulted in an overwhelming majority for Government Control. What the vote meant or its sufficient causes, are matters of conjecture. The explanation will no doubt vary widely with the views and information of the persons attempting such. It may be that the spirit of dissatisfaction or unsatisfaction with present conditions which has proved so fatal to Governments in their appeals to the electorate played a substantial part in defeating Prohibition.

Unsatisfactory conditions as to enforcement indubitably bulked large as a factor in determining the fate of the Prohibition Act. Some concluded it was unenforceable; others that better conditions of enforcement were more readily obtainable under different conditions of control. Others came to differing conclusions, but, mainly, against the Act.

The Government's adverse influence, no doubt, decided a number of its supporters against the Act. Nowhere did it receive support from the Government. On the contrary the Premier in his last three interviews with press representatives, during the days preceding the voting, drew attention to "the trouble the Prohibitionists had been to the Government." In one interview he gave the Act a blow as being "unenforceable."

Other facts of varying importance and effect entered into the situation. Outstanding among these was the "bone dry" heavenly condition made as an appeal to a people who a few short years ago consumed over 13 gallons of beers and liquors per capita. Hundreds who would have risked the Act with importation balked at a step to "bone dry" conditions in the immediate future. "Why vote twice; once to get a condition leading to a bone dry referendum if these people are right and sincere, and then, again, on such referendum. Kill it now!" was the argument which lined many a voter against the Act.

Whatever the reasons, the fact is clear, B. C. demanded a change. What is the present outlook? What should be done in the best interests of all? These are more important questions than why it happened.

With an election at hand the terms of the Act which will govern the sale of liquor in British Columbia for some few years, becomes a matter for the new Legislature. Prohibitionists must see to it well that their vote goes only to those who are genuine Prohibitionists where such are nominated. The political faith of the candidate can come in as a purely secondary consideration.

What should the attitude of a Prohibitionist be? Standing firmly on the ground that alcohol is a toxic without food value, he should keep that principle inviolate. Surrender there is impossible. Keeping this as his foundation, he should cooperate freely wherever possible with the hundreds of Moderationists who voted so with an honest desire to improve conditions.

Moderationists have a great responsibility. On them falls the burden of procuring and having properly enforced an Act that will be an improvement in resultant conditions over the present Prohibition Act. Have they estimated the influence that will be exercised in framing that Act on behalf of a well organized traffic that cares as little for Moderationists as it does for Prohibitionists and as little for law, order or decency as it does for either of these?

OUR PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS—A FORECAST.

In glimpsing some features of our present Provincial contest and estimating probable results, one always faces three difficulties: First the personal equation which renders one's efforts indecisive and partial because of natural defects and inwoven party and personal bias. Second, the impossibility of accurately judging the great silent vote that, after all, will be the determining feature of the contest. Third, the impossibility of relying on our press for any really useful and reliable accounts of events connected with the campaign.

One, therefore, has to judge as best one can, from such small portions of the field as may be within one's acquaintanceship.

Judging from such a view point, one first notes the large number of candidates offering. In part this is due to the removal of the necessity of a deposit by each candidate as was heretofore the rule. In part however, it would seem a widespread recognition of the fact that old party alignments and rules are largely a matter of history. Further, it is a recognition that the unsettlement of war has not subsided. Still fur-

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