

Privy Council declared the Act to be constitutional and valid.

In this Province, prohibitionists immediately appealed to the Ontario Government, of which Hon. G. W. Ross was then Premier, for a carrying out of Sir Oliver Mowat's promise, by the introduction into the Legislature of a prohibitory law.

After much consideration and the hearing of many deputations, the Hon. Mr. Ross introduced into the Legislature a Bill based on the Manitoba Liquor Act, providing for the prohibition of the liquor traffic in Ontario, but making the going into operation of the law contingent upon a ratifying vote of the Provincial electors. It was further provided that the vote should be taken apart from a general Provincial election, but that the measure should not be considered as ratified unless voted for by a number of the electors equal to a majority of the number voting at the last general Provincial election.

This condition was considered unreasonable, and the date chosen for voting was said to be inconvenient. Friends of temperance in the Legislature strove hard to make the conditions better, but were defeated, and the measure passed fixing December 4th, 1902, as the date of voting.

The result of this referendum was an immense majority in favor of the prohibitory law, but the total number of votes cast in favor of the law fell short of the number which had been declared necessary to make the prohibitive law operative, that necessary vote being 212,723. The votes polled in the contest were as follows:

For the new law.....199,749
Against the new law.....103,548

Majority for the new law.. 96,201

The temperance workers considered that the result of the referendum warranted immediate prohibitory legislation, and shortly after the voting a representative gathering of prominent workers of all classes and denominations appointed a deputation to wait upon the Government, and request that effect be given to the vote by the "abolition of the public bar, and the treating system and drinking in clubs, and the imposition of such other restrictions on the liquor traffic as shall most effectually curtail its operation and remedy its evils."

It was fully expected that in view of the great vote and majority, and hearing in mind the definite promise made by Sir Oliver Mowat, the Government would be ready to promote the moderate legislation which the representative gathering had outlined.

The deputation met the Government on January 15th, 1903, and in reply to a strong statement of the situation made by the delegates, the Premier, Hon. G. W. Ross, said:

"My duty in connection with this question is consult my supporters and that I shall do at the earliest opportunity. The earliest opportunity will be when the House meets when we will see how far the members will support the Government in implementing that vote. That is the only position I can take to-day. There are some phases of the question on which you do not agree yourselves. I hope we will agree, and when we have agreed I hope we will secure such legislation as will meet with the approval of the country."

The Legislature met a couple of months later, and the speech from the throne contained a paragraph, stating that the large vote polled "was an expression of the electors favoring further legislation with respect to the liquor traffic," and promised the submission of a measure with that object.