

ABSTRACT OF THE PROPOSED BILL FOR THE TREATMENT OF DRUNKARDS.

The main provisions of this Bill are the following:

In all cities of Ontario having a population of 20,000 or over, the Police Commissioners empowered to appoint a probation officer to take the supervision of drunkards placed on probation by the court on suspended sentence. These officers are not to be members of the police force, and they are to act more in the capacity of friendly visitors than as informers. They will also assist the probationer in finding employment when necessary. It will be their duty also to investigate, for the information of the court, the previous record of persons arrested for drunkenness, and to keep record of all such investigations and also of all cases placed on probation. In cases where a fine has been imposed by the court, this fine may be paid in instalments to the probation officer while the person is on probation.

A medical superintendent shall be appointed by the Government to inaugurate and superintend the medical treatment of inebriates and dipsomaniacs, and to assist in establishing for their treatment hospitals and special wards in general hospitals throughout the Province. He shall also make local arrangements for home treatment in suitable cases. The superintendent and probation officers shall co-operate in the work of reformation.

Government grants to promote the medical treatment of dipsomaniacs may be made as follows: Hospitals specially established for the reception and treatment of drunkards, or wards in general hospitals specially equipped for this purpose, shall receive as a bonus 25 per cent. of the cost of building or special equipment, as the case may be; secondly, a special grant of ten cents a day over and above the usual per capita grant to all hospital patients, shall be allowed for cases of chronic dipsomania; and, thirdly, an extra grant of forty cents a day shall be allowed for a period of seven days for cases of acute alcoholism—the medical treatment not to be considered as a charity but as a loan, to be repaid subsequent to treatment and while the person is still on probation.

Able-bodied chronic drunkards, instead of being fined or sent to jail, shall be sent to the Central Prison for not less than six months, and all subsequent sentences shall be cumulative. Able-bodied chronic female drunkards shall be sent to the Mercer Reformatory on cumulative sentences. Chronic drunkards, male or female, not able-bodied, may be provided for in county or city houses of refuge.

Three physicians of standing in the Province may be appointed by the Government as a Committee of Consultation, to co-operate without salary, with the superintendent in inaugurating and carrying out the purposes of the Bill.