



PROHIBITION



**Appeal, in Support of Prohibition, by Mr. W. F. Coaker,
M.H.A., President F. P. U.**

TO THE TOILERS OF NEWFOUNDLAND:

Fellow Countrymen,---

I venture on this important and unique occasion—which enables you to secure, if you will, for your Country and Children a blessing that will far surpass all other social and economic considerations—to address you in the hope of influencing your action in relation to the great question of Prohibition.

You have raised me from the position of a fisherman-farmer, residing in the backwoods of Notre Dame Bay, to the high position of influence, power and responsibility now occupied by me. You have shown time and again your confidence in me, and the undertakings that I have shouldered. I have striven continually to serve your interests and none have succeeded in their efforts to close my mouth or ears or silence my pen.

I therefore claim the right to advise you at this serious and momentous hour, believing it to be my bounden duty as your public counsellor. I have been a life long abstainer from the use of liquors. I am absolutely convinced that the use of liquor is responsible for most of the evils existing under our social system; I am convinced that it is an evil far surpassing all other evils confronting our civilization.

One million dollars of your earnings are annually spent in liquor. Another million dollars or more are lost to the Country through the effects of the liquor business upon trade and commerce at St. John's. I have seriously studied the economic effect of the use of liquor as it concerns St. John's, and I sincerely assure you that unless Prohibition becomes effective, the business of St. John's will gradually decline and be transacted at outport towns. The present business and trade conditions at St. John's are well nigh unbearable, and I attribute much of the troubles and difficulties to the use of liquor. Very few realize exactly what the trade operating at St. John's suffers in consequence of the evil effect of the use of liquor.

Every business man is worrying over the future of the trade of St. John's, and the cure for the trouble is Prohibition. This Colony cannot continue to throw away or lose \$2,000,000 annually without sooner or later bringing about an overwhelming financial disaster. Not one cent in real value returns from the spending of this huge annual sum of money.

Who will suffer if you by your vote wipe out the liquor traffic? Some will have to forego the supposed pleasure of taking a drink, and a few saloon keepers will be out of jobs; but what of that, in view of the great abiding benefits which will result from stopping the use of liquor. You cannot as reasonable men doubt the good effect that must follow the banishment of liquor from our Country. Your best interests are my sole concern. What will uplift and promote the welfare of Terra Nova is my constant study.

I ask you, therefore, to perform your solemn duty on the day selected to cast your vote for Prohibition, and go to the booth feeling assured that **your solemn duty to Yourself, to your Country, to your Fellowman, to your Family**, cannot honestly be performed except you vote to wipe out the liquor traffic in Newfoundland.

I have no personal object to serve or anything personal to gain by Prohibition. I can, therefore, regard the matter from a National, Social and Economic point of view without prejudice; and being fully convinced that the carrying of Prohibition would prove the greatest National Blessing possible to procure, I ask you as fellow toilers to avail of the opportunity now offered to remove once and forever this blight upon our Home and Country.

One thing I feel sure about, and that is, if your votes carry Prohibition you will never wish again to go back to the days of liquor saloons, for very soon after Prohibition is enforced the blessings of Prohibition will be so apparent as to cause every man who voted for the measure to rejoice and be glad for the day that gave him an opportunity to strike a blow at the greatest monster of evil and misery that ever troubled mankind.

Do not allow any false reasonings on the plea of shortage of revenue to the Treasury to influence you in the matter. I can assure you that instead of injuring the revenue, Prohibition will prove immensely beneficial, and the Treasury will gain instead of losing after one year passes.

Throw away all misgivings, Friends, and avail now of the means God has provided to confer upon poor Terra Nova, blessings that if availed of will soon cause every man and woman, boy and girl, to thank Providence. RIGHT must prevail, Friends, and the man who refrains from going to the polls to cast his vote in favour of Prohibition for Newfoundland will be guilty of an action that he will surely be sorry for in future years; and if Prohibition is lost through such indifference and lack of true patriotism, such men will forever regret their conduct, for to kill the measure now will mean the triumph of the liquor evil for another quarter of a century.

I implore you all to give this matter the serious attention it merits, and if you do, there can be no doubt as to the outcome of our efforts to secure for Poor Terra Nova, the benefits and blessings, social, financial, and economic, that await us if the liquor traffic disappears.

All over the world efforts are being made to prohibit or limit the use of liquor. You have all read of or heard how Russia prohibited the use of vodka, thereby transforming that Empire into a new Russia, which will not handle liquor under any circumstances. France has also achieved wonderful things by prohibiting the use of absinth—a liquor responsible for demoralizing the masses of France. Since Italy entered the war 2,000 liquor

licenses have been withdrawn by the Italian Government.

In England the consumption of liquor has been reduced 50 per cent by the liquor laws passed this year. In Canada Prohibition has been voted in Alberta and Saskatchewan and a vote is to be taken in British Columbia; while Ontario has increased the severity of its liquor laws. In the United States Prohibition is enforced throughout several of the States.

Fifty years from now, no liquor will be sold anywhere, and the people of that day will be puzzled over the fact that we in our day allowed this overwhelming evil to exist.

The day has now arrived to deal with the monster in this Colony, and I hope with all my heart the Fishermen will do their part on polling day to drive this liquor curse from Newfoundland.

If 25,000 votes are cast in favour of Prohibition, the Prohibition Law passed at the last session of the Legislature, will be enforced after July 1st, 1916. If 24,500 vote the measure will be lost. You will, therefore, appreciate that unless every possible vote favouring the measure is cast the chances of success are uncertain.

There will be no doubt in my mind about the result if all who truly love their Country and wish to see it prosper—as it must under Prohibition Laws—will go to the booth and vote on Polling Day. I therefore implore you all to embrace this one great opportunity to secure for our Country the blessings which must flow to all when the Prohibition Laws are enforced.

I wish to warn all our friends of the consequences of indifference regarding this vote. Every man who refuses to vote in favor of Prohibition might as well record his vote against Prohibition, for to abstain from voting is to give open support to the liquor business. If Prohibition is lost it will be because men who would not vote in favor of the liquor traffic, refuse to take the trouble to visit a booth and vote for Prohibition.

It is the duty of every Christian man to vote in favor of doing away with the liquor traffic. There is nothing to lose by voting for Prohibition; there is a lot to gain in a hundred ways by voting for Prohibition.

I venture to ask all our friends and good wishers to avail of this opportunity offered on November 4th to visit the nearest booth and place their mark X opposite the word "YES" which will be printed on the ballot paper, and thereby secure for our Country benefits far surpassing anything that could be otherwise achieved by twenty years rule of the best government possible.

Sincerely yours,

W. F. COAKER.

St. John's, Sept. 25th, 1915.