

THE CAMP FIRE.

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PROHIBITION DOES PROHIBIT.

The Royal Commission prepared and sent to the clergymen of Canada, a series of questions relating to different phases of the subject into which the Commission was appointed to inquire. Among these questions there were four that dealt directly with the matter of prohibitory law and its results. Under the direction of the Commission a classification was made of the answers to these questions and a summary thereof was embodied in the report. This summary is full of interest, being indeed most overwhelming evidence of the usefulness of such legislation. The replies were received from men of high character, men of wide experience, men whose business it is to observe, find out and know, concerning just the matters upon which they were asked to report. It is hardly possible to attach too much importance to their conclusions. In considering the answers recorded, it is of course necessary to bear in mind the fact that local circumstances often interfere with the effective operation of law. We must take the great majority of results as fair index of what the law actually accomplishes. Keeping these considerations in their minds, we respectfully ask our readers to carefully consider the questions and the classification of the answers, which are as follows:—

Question.—Has a prohibitory law been at any time in operation in a parish mission, or other charge in which you have been stationed?

Answers.

Affirmative	1,950
Negative	461
No experience	20
Replies indefinite	12

Question.—Was such law the Scott Act, the Dunkin Act, or some other local option law?

Answers.

Scott, Dunkin, and local option acts	1,021
Local option law	159
North-West Territories Act	63
Other laws	101
No experience	166

Question.—From your experience and observation as a clergyman, had such prohibitory law the effect of lessening drunkenness?

Answers.

Lessening	1,006
Negative	259
No change	4
No experience	101
Replies indefinite	91

Question.—From such experience and observation, had such prohibitory law the effect of increasing or lessening the drinking of intoxicating liquors?

(1) In the family? (2) In the community?

Answers.

Lessening	(1)	1,434
	(2)	1,557
Increasing	(1)	128
	(2)	137
No change	(1)	88
	(2)	65
No experience	(1)	106
	(2)	98
Replies indefinite	(1)	242
	(2)	166

IMPORTANT

Ontario Temperance Legislation, 1897.

To all friends of Temperance in the Province of Ontario:

A Government measure for the amendment of the License Law was introduced into the Legislature on Thursday, February 25th. It was anticipated that this measure would be one of progressive legislation, against the liquor traffic. The measure, however, is a deep disappointment to the friends of temperance, falling far short of what was hoped for, and what would be reasonable and right under the circumstances.

Of the twenty-three changes asked for by the deputation that waited upon the Government, there have been granted but two, namely, the prohibition of the sale of liquor to all persons under twenty-one years of age, and the abolition of saloons. The latter, however, is not to be fully carried out until May, 1899.

Instead of limiting the number of tavern licenses that may be issued, to the ratio asked for, the new bill proposes to provide that the number issued may be in the ratio of three for the first 1,000 of the population, and one for each subsequent 600. The inefficiency of this proposal will be understood by considering the fact that although in some places the proposed change would make a slight reduction in the number of licenses, it permits the granting of licenses far in excess of the limits that have already been fixed by many municipalities. For example, the limits prescribed by the new legislation would permit of the issuing of 303 tavern licenses in Toronto, where there are now only 150. It would permit of 82 in Hamilton where there are now only 54. It would permit of 54 in London where there are only 35. Other instances might be given.

The measure proposes to close bar-rooms in rural places at 10 p.m., and in cities and towns at 11 p.m. In many places earlier closing now prevails, and to some extent the change will be for the worse.

The request for power to be given a majority of electors to prevent the renewal of licenses, has been dealt with by a proposition to prevent such renewal by a petition of three-fifths of the electors, hampered by the condition that it must only be effective in places that the License Commissioners by resolution declare to be residential localities, that the licenses shall not be disturbed for more than a year after the petition, and other unreasonable conditions and restrictions.

Nothing at all is proposed in regard to the serious evil of club-selling above mentioned, and no proposition is made to improve the local option law as requested.

Not only does the bill ignore many necessary changes asked for, in the License Law, but it also proposes to change the present law so as to distinctly and directly favor the liquor traffic, and interfere with the power already in the hands of the people to curtail it. Municipal Councils may now limit the number of licenses to be issued in any year. This power has been enjoyed for nearly forty years. The new bill proposes to prohibit municipalities from exercising this authority oftener than once in three years, and further makes provision that the coming into operation of such limiting by-laws may be deferred for any specified length of time. It is in this respect exceedingly mischievous and retrograde in its character.

The bill as a whole is a measure that calls forth the strong disapprobation of friends of reform, who cannot accept it as in any sense a reasonable fulfilment of the Government's pledge, and must view it as in some respects legislation hostile to the best interests of the community, favorable to the liquor traffic, and utterly antagonistic to the strongly expressed sentiment of the people.

PROTEST.

Rousing meetings should at once be held to protest against the proposed legislation, and to call upon the Legislature to insist upon having public opinion respected, and the best interests of the community promoted, by effective legislation on the lines of the Government's pledge and the temperance people's requests.

It is also suggested that resolutions to the same effect should be adopted by temperance societies, young people's organizations, church congregations and other bodies, and that these protests should be published in the newspapers and forwarded to members of the Legislature.

LETTERS TO M. P. P.'S.

Every friend of our cause should immediately write, and make it a duty to urge every friend to write, to his representative in the Legislature, calling upon him to insist upon the fullest possible measure of effective legislation, laying special stress upon the necessity of granting, fully and without qualification, the reforms specified by numbers in the accompanying statement, and earnestly urging him to resist any attempt to take away the power now in the hands of the people to limit the number of licenses that may be issued.

THE W. C. T. U.

The programme of the W. C. T. U. for the coming year embraces extensive lines of effort, as varied as they are wise and good. Their consciences have been oppressed with the great work before them, they have fearlessly developed bold and comprehensive plans for its accomplishment, and their tender hands have laid hold of immense burdens. Shall they be left to lift alone? Shall they be crippled and defeated for the want of a few dollars?

It does seem to us that the women of Ontario will respond to the first question by flocking to these bands in all parts of the province and augmenting mightily the lifting power of the Union, and that the generous pockets of our country that are seldom buttoned against Christian charity will answer the second query with the quiet eloquence of a liberality that need have no misgivings as to the benevolence and prudence which will administer its well-merited and sorely needed contribution.

When the Waterloo of Prohibition is won, the credit will not be given to the Bluchers who have been off attending to other matters and arrive just in time to join the pursuit, neither will it be accorded the "Guards" who have watched the fight from a safe distance ready to lead the retreat or join in a sure victory with a shout a rush and a boast, but it will belong to those who have fought all day amidst shot and shell and charge. When the roll of these battalions is called, there will answer a large body of light infantry who have done skirmishing, guarded the ambulance, and in times of great need headed fierce assaults and seen hard fighting. Where heavier troops dared not venture, they entered with safety, and oft when dragoons and artillery were cumbered with burdens and harrassed by uneven ground, they marched lightly on in advance and held the position till the clumsier soldiery could come up. Whenever seen through the smoke of battle or mounting the heights, they are marked by a white badge, and upon their dazzling banner, always pure white amid the grim of war, is emblazoned the motto "For God and Home and Canada."

—A. R. Curman.

Bluff Germans are very fond of claiming the victory of Waterloo for their stern old Blucher, who marched on to the field with fresh troops late Sunday afternoon. Members of the "Guards" who had rested in safety all day at the rear of the army would insist that their fresh blood, put impetus into the final sweeping charge and that to them must be accorded the honor. History tells us however of certain battalions that marched to the front through the thick morning rain and stayed there all day under fire and charge; round shot traversed their "hollow squares," musketry thinned their numbers and the finest cavalry in Europe were hurled again and again with crushing force against their ranks—but they stayed there; and when at last the bugles rang out the welcome "Charge!" these battle-stained, patient squares dissolved into the "thin red lines," and with the vigor of victory well won, swept from blood-soaked Waterloo the magnificent army of the Empire.

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MRS. BASCOM,
Manager.