

PREMIER VENIOT TO BE JUDGE OF METHODS

Premier Veniot, in rising to reply, assured the representatives of the Alliance that he was speaking on behalf of all members of the legislature in stating that the members of the Alliance were always welcome to the House. Thanking the various speakers for their kind reference to his recent elevation to the position of Premier of the Province, Premier Veniot stated most emphatically, so long as he maintained that position he would carry out the duties of that office fearlessly and without looking for favors from anyone.

He would undertake no arguments, he continued, but would call attention to the statements of Mr. Fraser and Bishop Richardson, who had during their addresses declared respectively, that the prohibition law had been a great success already in the province and that it was the rarest possible thing to observe a drunken person. This, he claimed, was an indication that the law had been previously enforced to reasonable ex-

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In the face of these assertions, only one conclusion could be drawn by the speaker and that was that his predecessor must have exerted some influence in the enforcement of the Act. The Premier then stated his belief that the temperance people of the province would accord him the right to be the judge of the methods to be employed in the enforcement of the Act, unless he should fall down in his methods, in which event they could expect that he should then consult with their representatives.

Drawing attention to the difficulties confronting him in the enforcement of the Act, Premier Veniot stated that the bootlegger was the greatest obstacle to be met. The bootlegger had existed years before the adoption of the act. In this he was speaking from personal experience as a former secret-service agent operating against smugglers. Smuggling, declared Premier Veniot, existed then, it exists to-day and will exist for all times to come while large returns are to be secured. The dual authority existing between the federal and provincial governments in the field of prohibition was an other of the serious handicaps to the officers of the Government. Prohibition inspectors have no jurisdiction in themselves operating against illicit stills. Appointment of inspectors as inland revenue officials had to be secured in order to operate against such, in conjunction with the regularly appointed officials. In this connection, the Premier urged the Alliance to exert their influence at Ottawa.

Taking up the matter of the export liquor warehouses, Premier Veniot stated that these had been established absolutely in good faith to handle the liquor legally within the

province on January 18th, 1922.

The regulations passed controlling the export of liquor had been necessary, not for revenue, but to prevent the spread of this stored liquor to the province, liquor which the courts held had been legally within the province, declared the Premier, adding that the government felt that what had been done was that which was thought best under the circumstances. If these export houses were discovered to be the means of the spread of bootlegging, then they would be wiped out of existence, and steps have already been taken to determine this point, which he was not in a position to reveal publicly, although willing to discuss with the executive of the Alliance.

The Premier then produced a number of documents, including instructions from the Commissioner of Customs at Ottawa to the collector at the port of St. John, which he stated permitted of the importation of liquor into the province by the export houses, irrespective of the Prohibition Act, and claimed that the Liquor Export Tax Act of the province was the only method by which the provincial government exercised any control over these houses. These exporters had sufficient influence at Ottawa to have these changes in the regulations effected which did not place the entire enforcement of the act with the provincial government.

The Premier again urged upon the delegation the necessity of bringing pressure to bear upon the authorities at Ottawa in order to assist the provincial government in their measures for enforcement.

In concluding, Premier Veniot again assured the assembly that as long as he was premier of the province he would make the most earnest attempt of his life to see that this law was earnestly enforced.

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A farmer went into a general store in his town and bought a broom for 50 cents, but before paying for it he got talking to a neighbor. Presently he said to the clerk: "Would you mind changing the broom for 50 cents worth of tobacco?" The clerk made the exchange and the farmer slipped the tobacco into his pocket, while he continued to talk. He was reminded that his fence needed fixing so, he asked the clerk to exchange the tobacco for fence staples. When he got the staples he started to walk out.

"Beg your pardon, but you did not pay me for the staples," said the clerk.

"Oh, yes I did, I gave you the tobacco."

"But you didn't pay for the tobacco."

"I gave you the broom for the tobacco," said the farmer as he climbed into his car.

"But you didn't pay for the broom," protested the clerk.

"I didn't take the broom, did I?" answered the farmer as he drove off.

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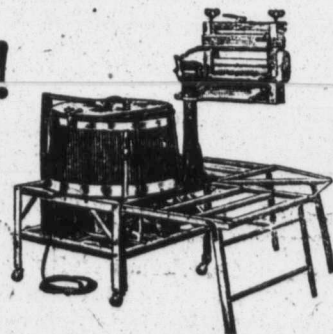
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