

# The Camp Fire.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF  
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

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NOTE.—It is proposed to make this the cheapest Temperance paper in the world, taking into consideration its size, the matter it contains and the price at which it is published.

Every friend of temperance is earnestly requested to assist in this effort by subscribing and by sending in facts or arguments that might be of interest or use to our workers.

The editor will be thankful for correspondence upon any topic connected with the temperance reform. Our limited space will compel condensation. No letter for publication should contain more than two hundred words—if shorter, still better.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1899

## THE GOVERNMENT REPLY.

The Dominion Government has sent to the Secretary of the Dominion Alliance a formal reply to the deputation that waited upon it last November. This reply will be read by prohibitionists with feeling of intense disappointment. In a hard fight against heavy odds, with comparatively small expenditure of money, against wealth, fraud and prejudice, they won a splendid victory, securing a majority of 13,916.

The Government bases a refusal to grant prohibition, on the ground of the smallness of the prohibition vote. This excuse comes rather late. When Hon. Sir Wilfred Laurier promised definitely on behalf of the Government, to obey the mandate of the people as expressed at the polls, he could not be understood as meaning to obey the mandate of the people who gave no mandate. The people whose opinion was to be respected were the people who expressed that opinion.

Quebec is the only province of the Dominion that voted against prohibition. The great majority recorded in favor of the liquor traffic by that province was largely the result of misrepresentation and fraud. Yet, it was wiped out and over-balanced by the English-speaking provinces, which gave a majority of 107,947 in favor of prohibition. The decision of the Government cannot be accepted by the prohibitionists, and an appeal will doubtless be made to Parliament for fairer treatment than the Government seems disposed to grant.

## PLEBISCITE FRAUDS.

In other columns of this paper will be found references to the Quebec vote in the prohibition plebiscite, charging that gross and widespread fraud existed in the making of returns, and that the great majority against prohibition, polled in the Province of Quebec, is not a fair expression of public opinion, but was obtained by ballot-stuffing of the most shameful kind.

These charges are made by gentlemen who are thoroughly reliable, conscientious and careful. They would not make them unless they had definite knowledge that what was stated was true.

The matter was discussed at the annual meeting of the Quebec Branch of the Dominion Alliance, held on the 2nd inst. We understand that an appeal is to be made to the Dominion Government for a thorough inquiry

into the matter. It is to be hoped that the Government will make a thorough investigation of the matter, enabling us to some extent to estimate the extent of these frauds, and thus make it clear that the honest vote polled throughout the Dominion, was even more overwhelmingly in favor of prohibition than has been supposed.

## CANADA'S LIQUOR CONSUMPTION.

The report of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue for the year 1898 shows a remarkable falling off in the quantity of spirits entered for consumption in the Dominion of Canada.

The average quantity of Canadian spirituous liquor paying duty annually for the past thirty years has been 1,010 gallons per one thousand of our population. The average annual quantity for the five years ending 1875, was 1,874 per 1,000 population. The average quantity for the five years ending 1898 was 658 gallons. The quantity entered for consumption in 1898 was 536 gallons.

This falling off was to be expected, inasmuch as the quantity of liquors entered for consumption in 1897, and the revenue collected thereon, were much above the average, a great deal of spirits being taken out of bond in anticipation of a change in the duties. The total revenue accruing on Canadian spirits in 1897 was \$4,772,369. The revenue for 1898 was \$3,593,980.

The total quantities of intoxicating liquors entered for consumption in 1898 for each 1,000 of our population was as follows:

Spirits.....	536 gallons
Beer.....	3,808 "
Wine.....	82 "
Total.....	4,426 "

This shows a per capita consumption of intoxicating liquor of about four and a half gallons, which is about one-fourth the quantity consumed in the United States, and about one-seventh the quantity consumed in Great Britain.

## SECOND OFFENCES.

In the License Acts of nearly every province, and also in the Canada Temperance Act, is to be found an important enactment in the following or some similar form:—"A conviction may in any case be had as for a first offence, notwithstanding that there may have been a prior conviction or convictions for the same or any other offence."

Under the Scott Act the penalty for selling liquor is for a first offence a fine of Fifty Dollars, and for a third offence imprisonment for two months. Under the Ontario License Act the penalty for selling liquor without a license is a fine of Fifty Dollars to One Hundred Dollars for a first offence, and imprisonment for four months for a second offence. In many places magistrates persistently treat all offences as first offences under the provisions above quoted, thus making a fine the penalty for every offence.

Where officers are not diligent, convictions are few, and offenders escape with fines that they can afford to pay, because of the profit they make. This system practically licenses liquor selling in Scott Act counties, and licenses diving in other places.

It may be said that this evil results from the abuse of their power by magistrates and prosecuting officers. Where power is abused systematically and continually, the simple remedy for the abuse is the taking away of the power. Matters have come to such a pass that it seems absolutely necessary to secure some modification of the clause quoted.

There is the more necessity for this change in view of the probability of our having prohibitory legislation at an early date. We want prohibition that will not be at the mercy in any locality, of any magistrate who prefers to use it as a means of licensing liquor selling.

## PUBLIC OPINION.

A great deal is sometimes said and written to the effect that it is absolutely necessary to have an overwhelming public opinion in favor of prohibition before a prohibitory law can be enforced. To a certain extent public opinion assists law enforcement, but laws are frequently well enforced and thoroughly effective in communities in which there is no public opinion in their favor.

The effectiveness of law enforcement is determined by the integrity and activity of the officers who have charge of its enforcement. The cases in which private citizens make personal sacrifices of either money, time or convenience to assist these officers, are very rare.

In ordinary cases policemen and other law-enforcing officials, are expected to diligently watch for evidence of law violation, and use every effort to detect and punish offenders. There seems to be in the minds of some people an idea that in the case of liquor laws some other people should do the work of the officials, or that the official's duty is simply to wait till other people bring him evidence or information of wrong-doing.

In certain parts of the United States law-enforcing officials are periodically elected by the people, and therefore reflect in their personal sympathies the opinions of the community in which they work. Such a state of affairs does not exist in Canada, and public opinion is not generally a factor in law enforcement, except in so far as it may influence men who are more anxious to stand well with their neighbors than to do their duty. Fortunately, most Canadian law-enforcing officials are responsible to higher authority, less influenced by local sentiment and more in harmony with public opinion as a whole.

Active hostility to a prohibitory law would come from exactly the same elements that are now hostile to the restrictive provisions of license law. Prohibition is naturally easier of enforcement than license. There will always be effort on the part of a few to defy any law by the violation of which they can make money. These offenders will not be kept in check by the opinion of a community. They can only be prevented doing wrong by honest officials. The personal character of law-enforcing officers is what decides whether or not a law is enforced.

## A WARNING.

The desperate efforts made by the anti-prohibitionists in the Plebiscite campaign shows forcibly that they feel the weakness of their position and the strength of the movement for the total suppression of the liquor traffic.

A determined attempt was made to secure the submission of a question that would have been misleading and unfair. An attempt was also made to induce the Government to declare beforehand that a simple majority of votes polled would not be sufficient to warrant prohibitory legislation. Falsehoods regarding the utterances of the Dominion Premier were freely circulated. A most ingenious and to some extent successful attempt was made to persuade friends of the Liberal party that a vote for prohibition might be an

injury to the present Liberal Government.

When the voting was completed, it was admitted that prohibition had carried. Returns were incomplete. Despatches from different points of the Province of Quebec, however, made it clear that that Province had declared against prohibition. A carefully calculated estimate of the probable majority was published. Curiously enough this estimate was increased from day to day during the interval between polling and the official publication of the vote. The Government announcement of the Quebec vote when made, showed a majority of about double what the anti-prohibitionists had at first claimed.

It is very improbable that the early estimates could have been so far astray. Quebec prohibitionists claim to have evidence of frauds which explain this increase, and confidently assert that their Province has been misrepresented and is not as hostile to prohibition as the reported figures would indicate.

All this is a warning to prohibitionists. It ought to impress them with the fact that they are dealing with an enemy absolutely unscrupulous, desperate in its fear of overthrow, and financially strong enough to make a tremendous fight. The contest has only begun. When Parliament comes to deal with the question of legislation every effort will be made to thwart the friend of right and to prevent the carrying out of the will of the people. One of the most important duties of prohibitionists at the present time is to let it be distinctly understood that they will stand by the men who stand in Parliament for what is right, and will unhesitatingly oppose, regardless of any partisan prejudice, all who side with the liquor traffic against the people. We owe this to our friends in Parliament, and to the cause upon the triumph of which so much depends.

## LICENSE FEES.

The Ontario Government has introduced into the Legislature a bill providing for an increase in the fees to be paid for licenses to sell strong drink. The increases are on a sliding scale culminating in the highest addition, which is made to the fees charged in cities of 100,000 population. The only city of this class is Toronto. Liquor sellers there will have to pay \$150 in addition to the \$350 that they are now charged, making the Toronto license fee \$500. The increase proposed in other cities is less, and in towns less still.

Temperance people are not very much interested in this question. It is not likely that the change to be made will diminish the number of licenses. The same business will go on, the same evil will be done, the same prices for liquor will be charged, the Government profit on the transaction will be a little more, the liquor sellers' profit will be a little less, the community will suffer just as much.

The whole theory of the license system is wrong. No Government has a right to authorize an evil business for a money consideration. The amount of the price does not affect the nature of the transaction. It seems to us that there is little moral difference between the action of the man who commits a crime for the sake of \$100 and the man who commits a crime for \$1,000. The liquor men are strongly objecting to pay more than they pay now. Temperance people are not interested in the division of the plunder and will probably leave the Government and the liquor sellers to settle it between themselves.