

WAR

A Call to Arms.

War has been declared—as serious a war to us, in many respects, as the war which dates from yesterday. As in that case, we need not wait for the completion of formalities for the calling out of the forces. We could wish the time of the taking of the plebiscite vote had been announced with the measure. The most suitable and probable time is immediately after harvest, say somewhere about the beginning of September. We cannot afford just now, at all events, to presume a later date. It is time for all forces to be brought into motion. It will not do for local temperance men to imagine that there is somebody managing somewhere who will tell them what to do or do it for them. There is certainly a recognized central organization all ready for action. But it is not like that of a nation, going to war, that votes a hundred million dollars and keeps trained hosts with nothing to do but attend to the business. The men who manage the Dominion Alliance and plebiscite committees have not four months' vacation to go campaigning in. Still less have they any money. The first thing we have to say is let every man fight before his own door. Each pastor has his pulpit and his lecture hall desk from which not only to exhort but to organize his own contingent for the war. This is a work which no pastor need shun because it is political. His duty to his own flock is plain, and one which he cannot escape. The pastors, however, are not the only leaders. The officers of temperance organizations everywhere must get together and see that the smaller companies are organized for local co-operation. In the absence of recognized official leaders, whoever will act in the way of calling the people together, may. Then as to money. A great deal of money is necessary for general purposes. Those who can for the moment do nothing else, can send something to help the general cause, however little. The 'Witness' will gladly receive money for the furtherance of this war. The temperance forces are organized by provinces. Whatever is thus received will be acknowledged in the 'Witness,' and forwarded to the headquarters of the province from which it comes.

The plebiscite bill, as laid before Parliament is exceedingly satisfactory, with the exception that it does not determine the date. That will probably be in the first or second week in September, when the harvest will be over in the country and when summer vacationists will be, for the most part, returned to the towns. The bugbear of a tag has been omitted. From a political point of view this is extremely wise.

The temperance people have just the ballot paper they want, and will be able to go into the campaign with their whole heart. If they do not gain the day it will be because the people do not want prohibition. They will then know where they are, and will have to buckle on their armour for further education. If they are wise, however, they will realize that the following ten years, all put together, will not afford them as much opportunity for educating the people as the next four months. A campaign of education is what that before us should be called. Let all objections be raised that any may have to raise. Let them be debated and threshed out. Let those who all their lives have accepted the prohibition principle as a matter of course see to their weapons and prepare to down cavaliers. The great argument is that our country is cursed by liquor; its

brightest youth are decimated by liquor; its enterprise is paralyzed by liquor; its public affairs are corrupted by liquor; liquor is its enemy, and its enemy is in possession; it is time it was driven out; every patriot will take a hand in the insurrection. Canada, it is true, is, among northern nations, the most temperate. That is no reason why it should submit to the enormous harm and loss from which it annually suffers in soul, body and estate. That is rather the reason why it should lead the nations in breaking the shackles of this bondage and teach them that it is possible to be free.

Its effect if the country is not ready for prohibition will be to startle reformers into anxious effort to make it ready. Supposing prohibition to become law, it is of the first importance that the country should be ready, not only to give it a passive preference such as a plebiscite victory would imply, but actively to insist upon its enforcement. No proposed plebiscite campaign to rouse and ripen the country for its duty. In fact, even supposing the people to be by vast majority prohibitionists, we can imagine no other way of mobilizing them anything like so effective as this. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his government are not all prohibitionists, but, as a whole, they have loyally stood by their engagement to their temperance members to bring in this measure, and Mr. Fisher has had the pleasure of bringing it in intact, uncomplicated, and unobstructed.—'Daily Witness,' April 22.

'Messengers' for the Sailors.

I wish I could afford to take fifty copies of the 'Northern Messenger,' to circulate among the men of our fishing fleet, and for them to distribute wherever they go. Our 'Daily Witness' is clipped closely to make scrap-books for the sailors, and I may say that our 'Union' gets many a valuable suggestion from your valuable paper. For the campaign we need to use every earnest effort and printers' ink must be our best weapon in this warfare.

Our local W. C. T. U. is trying to establish a temperance resort for sailors in this town, and when it becomes a fact we shall be thankful for any literature which you may be willing to donate towards our parlor.

This extract is taken from a letter from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. We have thought that some of our readers might be glad to help to send the 'Messenger' to these fishermen, thus doing a little definite missionary work. We should be very pleased to receive and acknowledge any sums sent in for this purpose.

Ten dollars will send fifty copies of the 'Northern Messenger,' weekly to one address.

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LE BABY'S OWN SOAP

THE 'NORTHERN MESSENGER' is printed and published every week at the 'Witness' Building, at the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets in the city of Montreal, by John Redpath Dougall, of Montreal.

All business communications should be addressed 'John Dougall & Son,' and all letters to the editor should be addressed Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.'

ADVERTISEMENTS.

SEEDS

The publishers have again completed arrangements with one of the oldest and best seed houses in the Dominion to supply the 'Witness' collection of seeds for 1898 which were so popular last year with 'Messenger' subscribers. The seeds have been carefully selected as most suitable for all parts of the Dominion. No packages can be exchanged from one collection to another.

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