

THE CAMPAIGN.

PROHIBITION.

Lucas vs Grant.

A GREAT PLATFORM BATTLE AT KINGSTON.

A tremendous audience filled the Kingston City Hall on the nights of the 27th and 28th January, to hear the debate on prohibition between Rev. G. M. Grant, Principal of Queen's University, and Rev. D. V. Lucas, of Grimsby. The topic as announced was, "That a law passed by Parliament, prohibiting the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor would promote temperance and public and political morality."

Dr. Lucas led. Roughly summarised his points were these:

1. The question had not been a new one; more than 500 acts of Parliament had been passed curbing and controlling the traffic. Universal opinion condemned the traffic as bad and dangerous.

2. The state has the right to prohibit. No one questions the right now exercised in prohibiting all but certain persons from selling; from selling only during prescribed hours; from selling to persons of certain ages, condition and race. The argument was clinched by the further statement that in such proportion were these prohibitions imposed did the records of crime and poverty show amendment.

3. The English beer law, passed in 1830 to put pure, cheap beer in easy reach of the people to wean them from the evil of gin drinking. The result was general demoralization and drunkenness. Before a year it was repealed.

4. In Britain, in 1854 the Forbes-Mackenzie act was applied to Scotland, to stop Sunday selling only. Result in a year the arrests for Sunday drunkenness were decreased two-thirds. The benefits were so apparent that 43 out of 48 Scotch members voted for a similar act to apply to Ireland. To further prove the good results of prohibition, places where it prevails were cited, viz., Bessbrook, Ireland; Cambridge, Mass.; Pullman, Ill.; Prince Edward Island, Halton and other places; conclusive evidence from official data.

Dr. Grant's arguments were these:

THE EVILS OF PROHIBITION.

"I have proved that, according to the experience of Ontario, the Maritime Provinces and the States which have tried the experiment, prohibition does not prohibit; that the consequences have been:—

1. Increase of drunkenness.
2. The traffic driven into the hands of a depraved class.
3. Multiplication of illicit dives.
4. Evasion of law and consequent increase among the people of contempt for law and general growth of the spirit of illegality.
5. Increase of perjury because people will not give evidence against a man for being

guilty of what the law makes a crime when they do not believe it to be a crime.

6. Opposition to law on the part of respectable citizens who are angry because their personal liberty is invaded without just cause.

7. Increase of bribery in various forms, from the bribery of policemen, sheriffs, deputies or constables, up to the more subtle but more dangerous bribery of politicians, which results from the formation of a vote which is solid on one issue without regard to the general welfare.

8. Violation of the law by magistrates and judges who do not call for former convictions, but inscribe the third or tenth offence as the first because they know that the law inflicts imprisonment for the third offence.

9. Increase of the spirit of hypocrisy, slander, sneaking and spying, and unwarrantable interference with others.

10. The breeding of a low class of infamous creatures called informers, who learn to tell lies with the facility of the father of lies.

I have also proved that those results would necessarily flow in larger measures from a more drastic law applied to the whole Dominion."

His closing words were:—"I have not lost faith in the gospel. I will trust to it every time in place of the policeman, and I will make the law only as the common sentiment of Christendom warrants me to do."

Dr. Lucas' rejoinder was:

The reason it was desired to beat out the traffic was because no portion of it was right. If medicine killed people body and soul its sale would be prohibited. He spoke of the continued opposition to the bill abolishing slavery. Was the bill to be condemned on that account?

The vote of the people by Plebiscite showed what they wanted and society had a right to protect itself from any evil that menaced the lives and welfare of the people.

SECOND NIGHT.

Dr. Grant opened the debate.

He took the case of Fredericton, N.B., cited by Dr. Lucas the night before as one that had proved the benefit of the law. Dr. Grant claimed that it had a very favorable situation yet there were more numerous arrests for drunkenness than in the town of Berlin, Ont., where there was licensed sale (this is a German community). He gave it as his own opinion "That the country should out of the money received from licenses establish a sanitarium where drunkards could be treated with Gold Cure or other means to purify their blood.

He also stated that Nova Scotia (which is largely under Scott Act) had more convictions for drunkenness than Ontario.

He then argued that if a law making it a crime to sell a glass of liquor were put upon a statute book and that view was not held by the public it could not be enforced. Instances were quoted where liquor sellers were committed to jail and were given an ovation by the people on their release.

Public morality depends largely on respect for law. Law should be felt to be the voice of God to the community. But where one law is notoriously violated and chuckled over, all law and the community is injured.

He held that immigration to Canada would be interfered with as people would not come to a land where their personal liberty was curtailed.

He closed with a strong appeal for the redemption of the drunkard and warned the people to have nothing to do "with the new-fangled method, invented in the United States.

Dr. Lucas' reply:

He opened by giving the information that in New Brunswick the act had not had a fair chance as the test cases appealed were held in abeyance by the courts for years, before judgments were given. As evidence of the people's desire, he stated the number of municipalities that had accepted the half loaf of Scott Act, when the whole loaf of prohibition could not be got.

His opponent tried to make capital out of the fact that witnesses in liquor trials sometimes perjured themselves and therefore we ought to give them their way and not interfere with the traffic. "If the Redeemer of the world had staid in His carpenter shop and the Apostles had not gone forth there would have been some perjury avoided."

He exposed the "personal liberty" bugaboo with the usual arguments. The present local by-laws governing the health, morals and conduct, quarantine regulations, etc., all prohibitions enacted in the public interest were quoted. "Coercion" is not the proper term. "One man's right of action ceases when it interferes with the rights of others:

He went explicitly into the Maine case, concluding with the statement that after 30 years trial the people of that state were overwhelmingly in favor of continuing and perfecting the law.

Then he concluded by giving the voice of the churches, all persistent, unequivocal and oft repeated in denunciation of the whole drunkard making business.

No doubt the debate will set many people to think, and our cause has everything to gain thereby. Dr. Lucas deserves praise for his fearless and able effort. For many years he championed our cause.

He will find few leading men in religious and educational spheres to oppose the movement, started and carried on for one and only one purpose, and that the uplifting of humanity from the slavery of vice, and relieving civilization from the greatest evil that besets it.

FIELD NOTES.

FROM THE DIARY OF OUR GRAND TREASURER.

On January 4th, I arrived at Ballantrae and held a meeting in the Methodist Church, Rev. P. A. Brace, the pastor, presided, and rendered splendid aid by his friendly interest. Bro. W. P. Widdifield brought a sleigh load of friends from Siloam, 8 miles distant, and their