

The Camp Fire.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

Edited by F. S. SPENCE

ADDRESS - TORONTO, ONT.

Subscription, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS a Year

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, FEBRUARY, 1902

THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

On Wednesday, 12th inst., the Premier, Hon. G. W. Ross, introduced into the Ontario Legislature the long-looked for prohibition bill. In presenting the measure the Premier delivered an extensive and very able address upon the situation, showing the progress that had been made in liquor legislation during the past twenty-five years, arguing in favor of the referendum principle, and giving details of the method by which the proposed Act was to be brought into operation. He said practically nothing regarding the prohibitory features of the bill, or the details of its various provisions, simply stating that it was "in the terms of the Manitoba Act," the provisions of which are well known. It is proposed that the coming into operation of the law is to be conditional upon its being ratified at an election to be held on October 14th next and upon its being voted for by a number of electors exceeding one-half of the total number of electors who voted at the preceding Provincial election. If such a majority should prevail, the question of compensation for liquor men is to be referred to a commission.

These propositions will be sadly disappointing to those friends of the temperance cause who looked for legislation to carry out the pledge given by Sir Oliver Mowat on Feb. 6th, 1894, and which was in the following terms:

"If the decision of the Privy Council should be that the Province has the jurisdiction to pass a prohibitory liquor law as respects the sale of intoxicating liquor, I will introduce such a bill in the following session, if I am then at the head of the Government.

"If the decision of the Privy Council is that the Province has jurisdiction to pass only a partial prohibitory liquor law, I will introduce such a prohibitory bill as the decision will warrant, unless the partial prohibitory power is so limited as to be ineffective from a temperance standpoint."

This was the promise to which the present Premier is understood to be committed. It was a promise made in view of a strong demonstration of public opinion manifested by a vote already taken. It was not suggested or thought that the carrying of it out was to be conditional upon any further voting. No one imagined that there would be presented to the public, as a fulfilment of the promise, prohibitory legisla-

tion so conditioned that it could not be made operative, which is practically the case with the proposals made in the Legislature on the 12th inst.

Even if it be admitted, as some people contend, that it is desirable to have another vote of the electorate upon the actual measure embodying the principles before approved, the fact still remains that it is proposed to re-submit the question in such form, at such time, and upon such terms as will work to the disadvantage of the prohibitionists and will be exceedingly unreasonable and unjust.

The percentage of votes polled at a general election is certain to be larger than the percentage polled upon a question submitted. Into a general election enter elements of rivalry, personal interest, strong persuasion, effective organization, prospect of personal advantage, financial support, and various proper and improper methods of securing votes, some of which the workers on moral reform lines could not or would not use.

Even where important questions are voted upon simultaneously with the election of representatives as is frequently the case in the United States and other countries, the personal vote is far in excess of the vote on the proposition submitted. The people of the State of Maine voted at the same time upon the question of electing a governor and making prohibition a part of the State Constitution. The vote on the question was 94,594, while the vote polled for governor was 142,413. The State of Kansas adopted prohibition by a vote taken in connection with a presidential election, in which the votes polled for prohibition were 175,911, while the presidential vote was 201,236. In both of these States prohibition is successful.

For the reasons stated, even when men are at the polling booth and ballots are placed in their hands, a large number of those who vote for political candidates will abstain from voting on a question submitted. When a question is voted upon at a time different from a regular election, the number who go to the polls will be small compared with the number who vote under other circumstances. In Toronto, on the important question of pledging the credit of property owners for large amounts, the vote polled if taken independently is always small. Important money by-laws have been carried by less than five per cent. of the possible vote. In South Dakota the total vote for and against prohibition at a voting on constitutional questions, was 30,907, while the vote polled at the nearest general election was 86,768.

If a vote on prohibition is taken at a special time, the vote will be much smaller than the vote in a regular election; and the provision, that prohibitionists to succeed must poll at the special time a majority of the votes cast in a general election, is manifestly to their disadvantage, handicapping them at the start with an unreasonable requirement. If, as is possible, the vote at a general election amounted to 450,000, prohibitionists at the special voting would have to poll 225,001 votes to win. The liquor men need not vote at all. Even if the liquor party did work hard and polled as many votes as

they polled in the Dominion Plebiscite, 115,284, they would be in the minority, yet prohibition would be defeated, although the prohibitionists had a majority of 109,717.

There is a plausibility at first sight in the Government's suggestion which must be studied before its effect is thoroughly realized. The sound British principle of democratic government is the principle of majority rule. Any such departure from that principle as is contemplated, is class legislation belonging to the out of date times when one section of the community was supposed to have more political rights than another. It is exceedingly unfair to count as voting against a measure people who refrain from voting or who are kept from voting by death, sickness, indifference or any such reason. The most that can be said about those who voluntarily stay away from the polls is that they are willing to let the question be settled by others and that they practically consent to abide by the decision of those who vote.

A vote taken apart from a general election involves inconvenience to voters and waste of time, besides a large unnecessary expenditure of public funds. The time chosen for voting, Oct. 14th, is a most inconvenient time, just after the busy harvest, during which people have not had opportunity to attend meetings, or take part in discussion. It comes close after the quadrennial session of the Methodist General Conference at Winnipeg, which will take away from the city many earnest workers who would like to take part in the campaign. The most economical and fairest time for voting, if a vote is to be taken, would be in connection with the municipal elections on the 1st Monday in January.

Prohibitionists are also disadvantaged by the suggestion that if prohibition is carried, some indefinite compensation will be provided for discarded liquor dealers. Opponents of prohibition will make the most possible of the argument that those who vote for prohibition are voting away an unknown amount of public money which in some form or other must be provided at the general expense. The bringing in of this new condition in this indefinite form, under these circumstances, is another handicap on the prohibitionists which must tell to the disadvantage of the temperance cause and the benefit of the liquor interests.

Indefinite compensation, a vote at a bad time, and the requirement of an unfavorable majority, are unfair conditions of the proposed referendum which make it exceedingly objectionable to even those prohibitionists who would not take strong ground against another vote however unnecessary they might deem any further expression of public opinion. These conditions are so unjust that the proposal to impose them on prohibitionists will certainly be resented strongly by the great mass of the temperance people as undue favoritism towards the liquor traffic. Legislation so conditioned is not a fulfilment of the made and implied pledges of the Government. It is not the legislation which the situation demands. It is to be sincerely hoped that prohibitionists will not accept it and that there will be found opposed to it enough members of the Legislature to prevent its being carried out.

IMPORTANT.

TORONTO, 1901.

DEAR FRIEND,—

You are respectfully requested to carefully examine **The Camp Fire**, a neat four-page monthly Prohibition paper, full of bright, pointed, convenient facts and arguments; containing also a valuable summary of the latest news about our cause. It is just what is needed to **inspire workers and make votes.**

We are embarking on a campaign for prohibition legislation in which the liquor traffic will do its utmost to block, delay, and if possible prevent our securing the enactment and enforcement of useful law. We have plenty of hard fighting ahead of us. We must keep posted and equipped, knowing all that is being done by our friends and foes, and sophistry and misrepresentation that will be advanced.

The Camp Fire will be one of the best aids you can have in the struggle. It will contain nothing but what you need. Every number ought to be preserved. You cannot afford to be without it, and the subscription price is only nominal, **Twenty-five cents per year.**

While a necessity to every prohibition worker **The Camp Fire** will also be of special value for distribution. We must keep up our educating work. Printed matter tells. It does its work continuously, silently, fearlessly and No form of literature is so generally read and so potential as the up-to-date periodical. It comes with the force and interest of newness and life. For this reason the form of a monthly journal has been selected.

This journal will be in every respect reliable and readable. Every article will be short, good and forcible, containing nothing sectional, sectarian or partizan. The literature of the old world and the new world will be ransacked for the most helpful and effective material. The price is very low.

Such literature will convince many a man whom his neighbors cannot convince. It will talk to him quietly, in his own home, in his leisure moments, when he can listen uninterruptedly, when he cannot talk back and when the personality of the talker cannot interfere with the effect of the talk.

It will ply him with facts, arguments and appeals, that will influence, instruct and benefit him. It will set him thinking. This is half the battle. Its wide circulation will swell the victory that we are about to win. This is its object.

Your help is asked in this great work. *Every society* should subscribe for and distribute hundreds of copies. This is the easiest and surest plan of making prohibition votes. Look at the terms:

Twenty copies will be sent to any one address every month for six months, for ONE DOLLAR, payable in advance

On no other plan can a small investment be made to produce so much of educative results. One hundred and twenty copies may be placed in as many homes. And have more than HALF A THOUSAND readers. One dollar will cover this placing of the claims of our cause before five hundred people. Ten dollars may reach FIVE THOUSAND. WILL YOU HELP US?

Address,

F. S. SPENCE,
52 Confederation Life Building,
Toronto.