

agement and government of an institution that is utterly useless, morally a curse, and that inflicts more actual loss and suffering upon the country than would A HUNTER ACCIDENT EVERY WEEK. Admit for the sake of argument—although the opposite has been proved—that law could not suppress the liquor traffic and that prohibition would not mitigate the evils of intemperance, still there stands before us the considerations that utter condemnation of the liquor business by-law, would open the eyes of many people who are now blind to its real nature. Such law would be an education in principles of morality, whereas the present law exercises a damaging and dangerous influence on public appreciation of an awful evil, and is far from being “a schoolmaster” of the right kind. If the liquor traffic is destructive and bad, the licensing of it is unjustifiable and wrong.

Contributed Articles.

THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ACT IN HALTON.

BY REV. D. L. BRETHOUR, MILTON.

SECOND PAPER.

“Is the Scott Act a success in Halton?” is a question very often asked Haltonians who are found outside of the county. The question is also asked by strangers who come into the county, shewing the interest gathering around the heroic contest the temperance people are waging with the rum power. The efforts made by the liquor party in the county, encouraged by their brethren outside, to bring the Act into contempt, and defeat, if possible, its beneficent intentions, are evidence that the drunkard-makers are in mortal dread of the Scott Act. And well they may, for it has done more to demoralize and destroy their trade than all the laws which were ever placed upon the statute books. The success of the Act means so much, it is not to be wondered at, that the liquor sellers would turn up earth and hell in their frantic efforts to defeat it; would stoop to any and every disreputable method within the power of a trade old and skilled in expedients to evade the operation of righteous laws. In seeking to enforce this law especially, we must look for, and expect to meet difficulties, which are not found in enforcing many other laws. The avarice of the liquor seller, joined with the debasing appetite of the drinker, form a partnership pledged to defy, and, if possible, defeat, the will of the people.

What does the success of the Scott Act mean, and in what respect and to what extent is it a success? I will mention a few of the many things the Act promises to do in every county where it is enforced, and shew to what extent those promises have been fulfilled in Halton.

The success of the Act means the destruction of the licensed liquor-seller's trade of making drunkards under sanction of the majesty of the law. Has it done this? Yes, *absolutely*. There is not a license to sell liquor in the county, but for medicinal, mechanical and sacramental purposes. Any liquor, therefore, that is sold for other purposes is sold illegally. On the 30th day of April, 1882, there were about 42 licensed drinkshops; on the 1st day of May, 1882, there was not one. Liquor-selling in Halton became a crime from that hour. The responsibility of the people for the drunkenness, disease, poverty, insanity, debauchery and crimes caused by the liquor traffic ceased, and the men who violated the law, and the men who aided and abetted them in so doing, became personally liable. The penalties of the Act will come upon the former when they are convicted, and the latter are convicted in the court of public opinion as joint sharers in the guilt. While the temperance people mourn the ruin that still comes upon some, they do thank God it is not with their consent.

The success of the Act means, again, the destruction of the remnant of respectability that lingered around the role of strong drink because of its legal recognition. That respectability is gone forever in Halton. Those hotel-keepers who have been fined for violating the law have by their own act destroyed what respectability they claimed to have had in doing business under license. Liquor-selling in Halton, what there is of it, has become a reproach and shame; it is simply infamous. Its respectability is a thing of the past—there is not even a rag left. The business now stands before the public unmasked of even its hypocrisy of decency. It is rotten, and seen to be so, from the core to the circumference.

There is no excuse for its sale. If a man obey not the law, he is a criminal, and righteously so. What has done this? The Scott Act. The refuge of license is shattered for ever. In this particular the Act is a success, absolute.

The success of the Scott Act means the destruction of the vicious treating system at public bars, which is one of the most successful agencies in creating the drink habit, and enslaving the drinker. Destroy this, and you paralyze the liquor traffic in the centre of its greatest power. This, to a very large extent, has been done. The amount of liquor sold over the bar, publicly, is infinitesimal. What is sold is for the most part in back rooms, behind locked doors, in dark closets and disreputable places, and then only to the few who are known to be, or suspected of being, favorable to the law-breaker and his business. The many cannot get it at all. The success of the Act in this particular is beyond reasonable contradiction. It is admitted by many of our enemies. The good that has been done in shutting up this way of temptation, which is open and attractive under all license laws, is incalculable. Because of this, many homes, and the hearts of many wives and mothers have been made glad. The success of the Act means, again, the vast lessening of the quantity of liquor used in the county. I know it is said by the favored few, that there is as much liquor sold in the county as there ever was. The statement carries absurdity upon its face, and is therefore its own contradiction. There may be few who drink as much as they did formerly, but very few. A great many who were in the habit of coming to the various towns to sell grain, &c., and do their trading, many of whom lingered until late in the evening, and then went home the worse for having drunk too much liquor, now go home before dark, and go home sober. Others who used to spend all they made at the grogshops, now bring much of their wages home to feed and clothe their families. I do not say all do this, but I do say there is an immense gain to many in this direction. And though the Act is not an *absolute success* in this particular, we are greatly encouraged by the results it has accomplished, and feel ourselves fully justified in defending and sustaining it. Its success means, again, the rescue of many who were entering on the ways of the drunkard by repeated tipping, for they will not stoop to use the degrading methods which the men who break the law ask them to do. To drive liquor into holes and dens is to save multitudes from seeking it, for many who would take a glass if it were on open sale, utterly refuse to degrade themselves to get it. This is a great gain, of which all good men are glad. Shut off the open sale of liquors, as the Scott Act has done, and you hinder many from forming the drink habit, and keep them from entering upon a drunkard's career.

The success of this Act cannot be seen all at once, for a very important part of it lies in its power to educate the younger portion of our people—our sons and daughters. The efforts made to enforce the law, and the success of a great many of those efforts are largely helpful to the formation of right views of the value of law in suppressing illegal and criminal business, and in the formation of correct opinions of the evil and crime of the liquor traffic itself.

The success of the Scott Act means, finally, the arrest of the business of recruiting for the great army of drunkards in the land. Abolish the sale of liquor and you shut up the recruiting shops where men enlist for drunkenness and crime.

There is hardly a drunkard to be found in the nation who has not been made so, either directly or indirectly, by the licensed liquor traffic. Continue license and the great army of habitual drunkards of *seventy thousand strong* in this Dominion, will continue to grow. There is only one effective and permanent method of reducing it, and that is by stopping the causes creating the supply. Prohibition is that remedy, and wherever prohibitory laws have been enforced the number of drunkards has been permanently reduced. This work of saving drunkards is more than the work of a day. The work of preventing their manufacture demands patience and time. In other ways that I might mention, the Act has been a benefit, but these must suffice for the present. In a few of those particulars mentioned there has been *absolute* success, and in the others the benefit has been so encouraging that the temperance people are unanimously resolved to oppose any efforts looking towards its repeal. The liquor-sellers, in any effort they may make to bring back license, will be met with the determined opposition which those only can give who are convinced of the righteousness of their cause.

Milton, January 10, 1884.

(To be continued next week.)