

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, APRIL, 1897.

THE PLEBISCITE.

The Dominion Parliament met on March 25th. The speech from the throne contained the following:—

It is desirable that the mind of the people of Canada should be clearly ascertained on the subject of prohibition and a measure enabling the electors to vote upon the question will be submitted for your approval.

That little statement is an official announcement that the Government will, within a few days, invite the friends of the liquor traffic and the representatives of the Christian sentiment of Canada to enter the electoral arena in a test of numerical strength, with a pledge that the prize of legislative recognition and support will be awarded to the winner in the contest.

The situation thus brought about is one of intense interest. The people of Canada have now an opportunity to rid themselves of the terrible curse of the legalized traffic in intoxicating beverages. We have claimed that public sentiment is in favor of prohibition. We are called upon to-day to demonstrate the soundness of that claim, with a pledge that if we can do so we may have the legislation for which we have so long worked and prayed.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE.

The contest ahead of us will be one of terrible intensity. Nothing like it has ever taken place before in the history of our cause.

The liquor traffic realizes the situation and will fight as it never fought before. The very life of this hourly institution with all its multiplied agencies and powers for evil, is at stake.

On the other hand there will be arrayed against the traffic the Christian sentiment of the community, the Christian churches of the land fighting for all which they exist to promote and which the liquor traffic threatens and assails, the philanthropic sentiment of the age seeking to elevate and raise down-trodden humanity, the growing intelligence of the community which has only recently learned the full powers and functions of organized society, and the awakening commercial appreciation of the injury that this curse inflicts upon all legitimate business interests.

The result of the conflict will depend entirely upon the energy, wisdom and skill with which the forces named in the last paragraph are marshalled and operated. It will be a struggle between cupidity and benevolence, between selfishness and philanthropy, between mammon and religion, and upon the fidelity of those who have arrayed themselves under the banner of the cross will rest the responsibility for the result.

THE ENEMY.

Against the prohibition proposition will be arrayed in the first place, the enormous amount of wealth invested in the liquor traffic. The Dominion census of 1891 gives the following as the figures of the capital invested in liquor manufacturing in Canada.

Distilleries	...	\$7,051,000
Breweries	8,311,453
Malt Houses		223,500

Total . . . \$15,588,953

In addition to this, there is the capital invested in the liquor-importing business, and in the different phases of wholesale and retail liquor-selling. Then there are other supplementary industries, such as the manufacturing of packages and other appliances and furnishings used in carrying on the liquor business. The total amount of money thus employed is very great.

Another opposing force is to be found in the relationship of men connected with the liquor business to other financial enterprises. Banks, loan societies, business corporations of every kind have among their directors and managers, men who are also interested in the liquor traffic. Through these men, through the institutions they control, and through the officers of those institutions, the liquor traffic touches nearly every man who has any dealings with banks or other financial institutions. Few people have any idea of the extent of the enormous influence thus exercised, and the grip that the liquor traffic has got upon the commercial life of the community.

A consideration that must not be lost sight of in this connection is the often-mentioned fact of the soulless character of business corporations. It is the duty of the officers of such institutions to act as the servants of an entity that is practically only a combination of capital for the purpose of increasing its strength. It is assumed that it is the duty of these officers to devote to the promotion of this object their time and talents; that they have no right to let their personal sympathies or charitable inclinations interfere with this business duty, as may a private individual. Like the physician who is bound to promote his good or bad patron's health, and the lawyer who is paid to win his good or bad client's right or wrong case, the corporation servant is expected to obey the conscienceless money power behind him. This tremendous economical fact gives the enormous wealth of the liquor traffic a power that it could not exercise under any other conditions.

The interests of those active members of the community who make money out of the vices and crimes of their fellow beings, are arrayed on the side of the liquor traffic because that traffic is the principal cause of the conditions on which they thrive. These selfish, heartless, unprincipled creatures are vigilant and energetic in the carrying out of their nefarious plans and take a front place in the great army of the forces with which we have to contend.

THE OPPOSITION ALLIES.

Many and mighty as are the forces directly interested in sustaining, defending and strengthening the liquor traffic, they would have little prospect of success were it not for the number and strength of the allies upon whose assistance they can confidently rely. They have the advantage of possession. The liquor traffic is entrenched. The prohibitionists are the assailing party. All the mighty mass of social inertia has to be overcome before the enemy can be effectively dealt with. In the coming campaign those that are not with us will be against us. They are many.

Opposition will come from the easy-going people who do not want to be disturbed. They would rather be allowed to rest in their indifference or move along in well-worn grooves. They resent the annoyance of having the claims of humanity forced upon their attention. They side with our enemies.

Another class is prejudiced in favor of old customs, or familiarized with the evils of the liquor traffic till they seem comparatively small, or pessimistic as to any possibility of effective reform. They are against us and will be found more active than those who simply do not care.

Some are actually ignorant of the terrible evils that surround them. They have not been brought into direct contact with the awful results of intemperance. They see no need for the effort we are making and oppose a movement that they consider unnecessary.

Many are patrons of the liquor traffic, indulging in intoxicants. They do not desire to have their personal pleasures interfered with, nor their lulled consciences stirred into annoying activity. They want their liquor and dispute our right to criticise their habits or interfere with the business they thus patronize.

Some theorists think that the legislation we seek is an improper invasion of private rights. They argue themselves into the belief that prohibition is unjust, and conscientiously oppose it.

Some patriotic men fear that the results of a change would be injurious to our political system. They dwell on such questions as loss of revenue, constitutionality, and law enforcement.

Some have come to look upon the liquor traffic as having some rights because of our past and present toleration of it, and object to legislation that does not directly provide compensation for what they call the destruction of vested rights.

Some timid souls fear to face the battle that must follow legislation. They dread a contest with a business known to be law defying and aggressive. They see difficulties in enforcement and are much afraid of smugglers.

Some politicians oppose us in fear that our movement may hurt their political party, or that they may lose support by being compelled to take one side or the other in the contest.

Some people are personal friends of those engaged in the liquor business and oppose it for their friends' sake.

There are many who naturally take the side of wealth and power and display.

Many sell their support to the highest bidder and are easily bought to fight against us.

Some persons are depending upon the bounty of those interested in the liquor business and side against us with their benefactors.

Some people are actually bribed by the benevolence of those engaged in the liquor traffic who are liberal to charities in which such good people are personally interested.

These different groups make up a mighty array difficult to win over, difficult to overcome, the auxiliaries of the enemy whose evil power we are fighting.

FOR THE RIGHT.

Some of the enemies with which we have to contend have just been named. The forces that from varied motives will fight hard for the maintenance of the liquor traffic are many.

Against them will be arrayed the forces that work for the up-building of society, that are loyal to right, that make for good. The keenest discernment, the fullest knowledge, the

grandest courage and the highest principal will be on the prohibition side. The men and women who first and forever base their plans and practices on loyalty to God and the golden rule, these are the active body of the prohibition forces. Character, conscience and philanthropy carry our banner in the fight.

Our allies are those who are open to argument, who can be convinced by sound logic and won by earnest appeal. We have no bounty or prize for those who enlist in our holy cause. We appeal to all that is best and noblest in human nature, and we believe that our appeal will not be in vain.

The temperance reform offers nothing to selfishness or ambition. It rallies around it those who are loyal to truth and willing to make sacrifice for the welfare of others. Its strength to-day is in the Christian churches. Those who are earnestly seeking to work out the gospel plan of social life must resist an agency that is at enmity to and destructive of that plan and its results.

The temperance reform is but one phase of this Gospel plan. It makes self-sacrifice for humanity's sake, and organizes resistance against an aggressive evil. The struggle is the old one between good and evil, between right and wrong, between light and darkness.

The final outcome of this struggle is absolutely certain. We may have some doubt as to the immediate result of the present effort. Ultimately, however, evil shall be overcome by good. To-day we are striving to win for the right the mighty aid of legal enactment. Notwithstanding the strength of the allied forces that oppose us we have faith in the Christianity of the Canadian people. If they realize the nature of the issue and do their duty towards God and humanity we shall win a speedy and glorious victory.

OUR WEAPONS.

The pulpit, the platform, personal persuasion and literature circulation are, roughly speaking, the lines of effort on which the coming battle will be fought. The prohibitionists are likely to have a monopoly of the first named two. On the other two the liquor traffic will also conduct its campaign.

At present we refer briefly to the last mentioned. We must have an abundant supply of the very best literature available. This literature must be varied for the different kinds of work to be done. Campaigners will need volumes of statistics, full statements of facts, extensive works of arguments, from which to draw materials for pulpit, platform and personal work. Tracts and leaflets containing pithy statements and cogent appeals must be made to fairly cover the country. One of the most potent forms of literature, because of its popularity, is the periodical. Men read newspapers who read nothing else. What these papers contain has a freshness that makes it peculiarly acceptable. The prohibition literature that comes in periodical form will be probably the most useful in the contest.

The organized prohibitionists of every locality should systematically plan for the presentation of their views through the secular press. We may rely upon the religious journals of Canada to do their full share of the fighting. The special prohibition press will be a power for good. Above and beyond all these we need some plan of placing fresh prohibition literature periodically in the hands of all the electors, many of whom do not subscribe for the religious and secular journals that are doing the most for our cause.

The CAMP FIRE meets this necessity. It will contain just the matter needed by our workers. It will be attractive, reliable, effective, making votes wherever it goes. The terms on which it will be supplied to local workers, for free distribution, will be so low that all can avail themselves of its help. Now is the time to make preparations, to lay plans, to send orders.