

### The Brewers' Petition.

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, in Parliament assembled.

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTETH:

That your Petitioners and other Brewers have, under the authority and protection of the laws of the Province, vested large sums of money in the purchase of land, the construction of buildings, and the erection of machinery and apparatus, necessary for the establishment and prosecution of the business of brewing porter, ale, and beer.

That your Petitioners purchase annually, for the purpose of brewing, large quantities of agricultural produce, such as hops and barley, and employ a considerable number of hands.

That your Petitioners produce annually a large quantity of good, pure, and wholesome porter, ale, and beer, which is sold for consumption in this city and district.

That your Petitioners have seen with great alarm the introduction of a bill into the Provincial Parliament, entitled "An Act to prevent the traffic in alcoholic and intoxicating liquor," by which the trade and business of your Petitioners, hitherto protected and encouraged by law, will, for the future, be absolutely destroyed, and your Petitioners reduced to ruin.

That your Petitioners conscientiously believe the only certain effect of the law, if it pass in its present form, will be to inflict injury upon the farmer, by curtailing the demand for his hops and barley, and on the lawful distiller, by greatly reducing the demand for spirits, while it will effect the entire destruction of all the breweries in the Province, by putting an absolute stop to sales of ale, beer, or porter, which articles are never kept for medical, chemical, or mechanical purposes; while, on the other hand, it will act as a premium to the smuggler and illicit distiller.

That whatever may be asserted as to the mischief arising from the abuse or over-indulgence in spirituous liquors, your Petitioners believe that similar objections have not been generally urged against the use of ale, as a beverage; nor are your Petitioners aware that crime, poverty, disease, and the demoralization, have ever been attributed to the use of ale, beer, or cider.

That should your Honorable House, nevertheless, deem it expedient to include within the operations of the law all porter, ale, and beer, your Petitioners most respectfully hope that the benefit, thereby proposed to be attained, will not be sought for by the utter ruin of your Petitioners, but that a just and reasonable compensation will be paid to all brewers in the Province now lawfully engaged in business.

Wherefore your Petitioners most respectfully request that your Honorable House will take the premises into your favorable consideration, and exclude from the operation of the proposed law all porter, ale, beer, and cider, made in the Province, or insert a provision in the Act, granting a just and reasonable compensation to all proprietors of breweries now actually and lawfully engaged in business throughout the Province.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

(Signed,)

THOS. LLOYD,  
JOSEPH KNIGHT BOSWELL,  
JNO. MCCALLUM,  
PAUL LEPPER.

Quebec, 4th April, 1855.

[The reasonableness of the prayer of the above petition most recommend it to the good-feeling and common-sense of every just and candid man in the country—the folly and fanaticism of the intemperate advocates of temperance to the contrary notwithstanding.—ED. MONTREAL HERALD.]

We publish the above ably drawn petition, which will doubtless be extensively used against the proposed Law, for the purpose of replying to the arguments it contains, and we give the accompanying remarks of the *Herald* to shew what unfairness a respectable paper may be betrayed into by hostility to this measure. To stigmatize as foolish and fanatic those who are conscientiously seeking to promote the best interests of the country and their fellow men, in the way to which they are led by long and careful

investigation and without any possible motive of pecuniary gain or personal appetite to gratify in the matter, is surely an abuse of terms. If the Editor of the *Montreal Herald* will scan the judgment and motives of those who oppose the Maine Law, he will find them perhaps more open to criticism than those of its supporters.

The most important point attempted to be made in the petition is that the brewing business has been protected and encouraged by law, and that it is not fair to ruin those who have embarked their capital in it by putting a stop to it. To this it may be replied, 1st, that public interests must override private interests. 2nd, That the mere toleration of a business which is all that law has ever done towards the manufacture of, or traffic in, intoxicating drinks, does not imply a perpetuity of that toleration. If licenses are granted one year, they may, without involving any claim for vested rights, be withheld the next. 3rd, The prohibition of this traffic is not coming on the brewers without warning, inasmuch as it has been in one shape or another before the country for several years, and the rapid progress of the measure in adjoining states has surely given them ample notice. 4th, The loss would not be so great after all if they were to turn their establishments into mills, as has been the case with one of the largest distilleries in Scotland, or use or sell them for some other kind of manufacture. Besides, the gain of getting out of a morally bad business, and one extremely dangerous withal to personal habits, would be a set off against pecuniary loss.

The petitioners call their liquor pure and wholesome, and say that whatever may have been urged against spirituous liquors, similar objections have not been brought against ale and beer. This statement betrays great ignorance of the later stages of the temperance reformation, from which the prohibitory law takes its rise. In the earlier stages of that reformation fermented liquors were not included in the pledge, but since 1833, or for more than twenty years, they have been as distinctly condemned as distilled liquors, and with as good reason. There is, probably, as much alcohol in a tumbler of ale or porter as in a tumbler of whisky and water, and it is generally mixed in the former with far more deleterious substances. We know not how "pure, wholesome" malt liquor is made in Quebec, but in Britain and the United States, cocculus indicus, nux vomica, tobacco juice and other bitter and stupefying narcotics have figured largely in its manufacture; and the malt liquor drunkard is found, in consequence, to be more bloated, stupid and brutal than any other, whilst he will ruin himself and family quite as surely.

The petitioners urge the oft-repeated argument that their business is a benefit to the farmer; but the farmers of Canada have, ere this, seen through this fallacy, as is obvious from the result of elections in rural districts. The fact is, that whatever immediate profit is derived from the brewery and distillery demand for grain is far more than lost in other ways—such, for instance, as increased taxes, diminished labor, intemperance in families, and, in the greatly diminished market for agricultural produce, in the case of all the families which are ruined or partially ruined by strong drink.

We trust members of the Legislature will not be influenced by this plausible petition, or the bitter remarks which anti-Maine Law papers may append to it. At all events, we do not think that either will have the least weight with their constituents.

We have only one thing to add, and that is, if pecuniary indemnity to all brewers, distillers, tavern-keepers, and grocers were the only price at which the Maine Law could be purchased, it would still be cheap at all the money. Were Government to buy all their establishments at a valuation before the Maine Law takes effect, and sell them by auction afterward, we believe it would gain by the operation; so great will probably be the rise of property in consequence of that measure. But there is no ground for this indemnity. How many business have been ruined by the changes of tariffs? But in no case was there any indemnity.—*Montreal Witness*.