

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY AT VICTORIA, B. C.

SUBSCRIPTION - - \$2.00 PER YEAR.

Advertising Rates on Application.

D. M. CARLEY EDITOR

L. G. HENDERSON . . . BUSINESS MANAGER.

Office—No. 77 Johnson Street.

VICTORIA, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1892.

LIQUOR LICENSES.

It would appear that a certain class of the community and we have a considerable amount of respect for the clergy and the views which many of them entertain, and which are shared by not a few lay members of society—are disposed to allow their personal convictions to lead them into the commission of acts of injustice in connection with the license question. The advocates of prohibition have not yet succeeded in working up public sentiment to such an extent as to give the slightest expectation that a plebiscite would endorse the total abolition of the traffic. In a number of towns and townships in Eastern Canada the Scott Act has been voted upon in some cases endorsed and in others rejected, while some of the communities that have given it a fair trial have refused to continue it any longer. The system of local option, which practically obtains, is sufficient for all purposes for the present, and the proper course for those to pursue who object to the traffic, with its many admitted evils, is not to put themselves in the position of obstructionists, and as persecutors of bad and good people alike, but to work up public sentiment by the powerful means which are already at their disposal. As we have intimated, they make a dead set against the reputable as well as the disreputable citizen, instead of attacking the system in a proper and effectual manner. This they do, as in this city, before the License Court, appealing to absurd technicalities, and making themselves and their movement unpopular and therefore unsuccessful.

It is held by many that so long as the License law exists no one of good character should be refused, for if too many licenses be granted, some of their holders will be forced out of the business by the inevitable rules that govern supply and demand, while no more liquor will be consumed. Let, we say, the license fee be fixed at a good round sum; let the provisions of the law be enforced with all possible strictness, which is not the case at present; for, despite the Sunday law, there is no scarcity of liquor during the hours prohibited. Who is to blame for this? Are the advocates of temperance doing their duty? By looking out for breaches of the law and seeing to the punishment of the offenders they would be effecting much more than by haunting the License Court and persecuting men who have been accustomed to conduct well regulated establishments, in that way

playing into the hands of less worthy applicants, who, despite their offenses, not unfrequently obtain what is refused to much more worthy people.

The Prohibition Commission established by the Dominion Government has recently been taking evidence in Montreal and will soon be on its way to this coast. Among late witnesses, have been two clergymen—one of the Methodist church, the other belonging to the Church of England. The latter, who took the stand first, no doubt opened the eyes of some of the "unco guid." He agreed with previous witnesses as to the bad moral effect of having laws on the statute book that could not be enforced, adding that if the proper class of men were put in charge of public houses, and the magistrates were severe, the moral effect would be undoubtedly good, and the public house keepers made to form a highly respectable class. To his mind, licenses should be restricted in proportion to population, but he did not approve of the system by which it was necessary for an applicant for a license to procure twenty-five signatures. A limited number of licenses should, he held, be granted, and the magistrate granting them should have full discretion. With regard to Sunday selling, he considered, assuming that the traffic was to be allowed at all, that there should be some Sunday selling allowed. There is a good deal of sound common sense in this. The Rev. gentleman emphatically denied that the use of wine at the communion had any effect in encouraging a taste for liquor, yet, on the other hand, prohibitionists considered wine and fermented drinks evil things and not gifts of God; nevertheless, they used them for sacramental and medicinal purposes.

The Methodist minister had no hesitation in saying that the liquor traffic was indefensible in almost every way, and as a preliminary step to prohibition, tending to educate people to that end, he would commence by closing the saloons, then cancel all shop licenses, and abolish bars in hotels. The law, he said, could forbid a man to sell liquor, as it forbade him to sell tainted meat, and there was no interference with the liberty of the subject there. There are, it may be remarked, many people equally as well posted as, and possessed of far more chemical and hygienic knowledge than, is the Rev. gentleman, who are not disposed to place liquor in the same category as tainted meat.

A most important statement was made by a prominent member of the Dominion Alliance and this was that prohibitionists did not wish to interfere with the right of individuals to purchase liquor for private consumption in their own houses. He was, however, forced to admit that if the manufacture of liquor were prohibited, individuals could be prevented from procuring it. We make this reference to the subject in view of the fact that the Royal Commission will, before long, take the sense of Victoria on the subject, and we would therefore remind both sides to have their case ready, as the subject is of too vital importance to allow nothing more than a one-sided view of the matter to be considered.

THE CHOLERA.

The action of the Government in appointing Dr. Davie permanent health officer, is a matter of congratulation for the entire province. The service rendered this city at the most critical period in its existence by that gentleman will not soon be forgotten, and now that we are exposed to a visitation of cholera, if not this year perhaps next, his position at the helm will result in a feeling of security on the part of those who have not had much faith in the capability of the City authorities.

All over the continent, the situation is regarded as serious, and we read that cities even so far inland as Minneapolis are making active preparations to battle with the dreadful disease in case it should make its appearance. The extent of the epidemic will depend on the care with which it is looked after. In this connection, it would be well for the public to awake to a full realization of the necessity for a close observance of the laws of hygiene and sanitation on the part of each individual and society in general. The best authorities say that Asiatic cholera is a filthy disease carried by unclean persons to unclean places. It does not travel by waves or blasts. People can drink cholera and catch cholera, but they cannot catch cholera in the sense in which they can catch measles, scarlatina or whooping cough, so that with proper appliances the sick can be moved without fear of the nurse catching the disease. Cholera is carried by persons in their clothing and the secret is along the lines of human intercourse.

The home of cholera is India. Wherever, as in Calcutta and Madras, the water supply has been purified and the soil scavenged, cholera has been kept out, but the filthy habits of the native who, contrary to his religion and his sacred books, drank from the tank in which he bathed and washed his clothes had to be stopped. Hamburg, which has been poisoned by immigrants and other travelers from Russian ports, has unhappily presented filthy conditions not inferior to those which have invited the devastations recently of Russia, and of late years of Naples, Sicily, Spain, Marseilles, Toulon and the mild outbreaks of Paris, all epidemics spread by filth in water and soil, of which most of those cities have learned the lesson and taken it to heart more or less completely; to the extent to which they have done so they will have relative immunity in the future.

No doubt Dr. Davie will see to it that there will be a strict observance of sanitation and hygiene, and Victorians who have been taught the fallacy of placing their dependence in pothouse politicians, will give him all the assistance in their power to carry on the good work. The inefficiency of the preventative measures, taken by the city authorities were quite apparent; but in pleasing contrast were the thoroughly decisive measures adopted by Dr. Davie.

It is announced that the Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraph Company have made another reduction in their rates. This the interested public will hail with satisfaction and with the hope that it may be the precursor of a further diminution.