

THE NEW PARTY.

AN INHARMONIOUS GATHERING.

The Shaftesbury Hall Meeting—Some People Think the Methods of the Promoters Wrong—And are not allowed to Co-operate—Organization of a Political Party and the Plan.

PURSUANT to an advertised "Call," upwards of one hundred gentlemen assembled, on Wednesday afternoon, at Shaftesbury Hall. The call referred to, laid down a platform of principles on which it was proposed to organize a new political party, and requested the attendance of electors from all parts of the Dominion, who were willing to organize on the basis of the published platform.

This movement had its origin in Toronto in September last, at a convention called by the Dominion Alliance. To the report of a Committee on Political Action had before that convention, Rev. Dr. Sutherland moved the following amendment, which was seconded by J. B. Loughlin—

Whereas, the experience of thirty years in Great Britain, the United States and Canada shows that no advanced temperance legislation need be expected from the existing political parties as such;

Whereas, the public utterances of party leaders in the Dominion afford no ground of hope that prohibition will be made a plank in either platform in the near future if at all;

Whereas, there is no distinct issue of principle between the existing parties which renders their continued existence either necessary or important;

Therefore, be it resolved, that this convention is of opinion that the present juncture is peculiarly favorable for the organization of a new party with prohibition as a chief plank in its platform.

After a spirited discussion which took up a good deal of the time of the Convention, the amendment was adopted, by a vote of 32 to 25. No further action was then taken in reference to this matter; but after the adjournment of the Convention a call was made for the supporters of Dr. Sutherland's resolution to remain for further consultation, and between thirty and forty members of the Convention waited.

Dr. Sutherland was moved into the chair, and a committee was appointed, composed of Dr. Sutherland, Rev. Messrs. Brethour and Burgess, and Messrs. Munns and Wigle, to advise further in reference to a programme and platform for the new organization.

It was generally understood that the call issued for the Shaftesbury Hall Convention was issued by the Committee thus appointed, and many persons expected that the Committee would present to this convention the prepared platform as a report, which the Committee would proceed to discuss. This was evidently not what the Committee intended.

Outside the door of the room in which the meeting was held on Wednesday last, there was a table on which was a book, wherein the new platform was written out in full, followed by a declaration of approval of the same. Only those who signed this declaration were admitted to the meeting. About half of those who had come objected to pledging themselves beforehand to a platform which they had not discussed and adopted. Some of these persons, who were refused admittance, expressed themselves as being strongly in favor of every plank of the proposed platform, but objected to the Committee's excluding from the meeting, all who refused to commit themselves to the whole manifesto. Dr. Sutherland and Mr. J. T. Moore, on behalf of the Committee, announced that the position taken would not be receded from, and some very strong language was used in reference to the persons who refused to sign the submitted document, who were informed that they had no right to be present, and should at once retire. Previous to this time a number of gentlemen had inscribed their names on the book and most of them had passed into the inner room in which the meeting was to be held. Several of those who had not gone in now stated that they were not aware that the book presented to them was anything more than a mere register of those in attendance, and they, with the great majority of those who had not signed, left the building. The platform referred to, reads as follows:

1. Righteousness and Truth in public affairs as well as in private business and no compromise with wrong. 2. Equal Rights for all Creeds, Classes and Nationalities, but exclusive privilege to none. 3. A National Sentiment, a National Literature, and in all matters of public policy—Our Country First. 4. The Prompt and Absolute Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic, as the objective point of Temperance Legislation; in the meantime the honest and vigorous enforcement of the Scott Act, and of all other laws for the re-

pression of Vice and Intemperance. 5. Retrenchment and Economy in Public Expenditure, with the view of reducing our enormous National Debt. 6. Manhood Suffrage, with an educational qualification; that is, a vote to every freeman of legal age who can read and write. 7. The Extension of the Franchise to Women. 8. An Elective Senate. 9. Civil Service Reform.

The gentlemen who remained organized their meeting with Dr. Sutherland as chairman and Mr. T. Moore as Secretary. The meeting was opened by prayer led by Rev. D. L. Brethour, Committees were appointed, and a scheme of organization was subsequently submitted in the following form:

(1) That the platform already published be now read and adopted as the basis of organization.

(2) That the new party be "The Patriotic League of Canada."

(3) That the motto of the party be—"For God and Our Country."

(4) That the headquarters of the party be in the city of Toronto.

(5) That the Convention appoint a central executive council of nine members besides a president, chosen from among those who have signed the platform, and are willing to assume the duties involved.

(6) That the said council be instructed to prepare as soon as possible a detailed plan for county and local organizations and forward the same to those persons who may be chosen to organize the league in the counties, towns or cities.

(7) That the selection of suitable persons to support the work of organization in counties, towns and cities be made by the central executive council, such persons to hold office under a commission signed by the chief officer of the said executive, who shall have the authority by the vote of the executive to revoke or cancel a commission when deemed necessary.

(8) That persons chosen and commissioned as indicated in the preceding paragraph shall be corresponding members of the central executive council, and may be summoned by its president for consultation when necessary.

(9) That in our judgment the plan of organization to be devised by the central executive council should be the most compact and thorough, compatible with personal freedom, and, that will admit of the most complete and effective communication between the executive and local organizations.

(10) That membership in the party be open to all electors under Dominion and Provincial franchise who subscribe to the platform and who contribute one dollar or upwards per annum to its funds.

(11) That the president of the central executive council be elected by this convention, and that the said council have authority to elect a vice president if deemed necessary, also a secretary and treasurer.

(12) That the president be elected by ballot without nomination.

This report was discussed clause by clause, and adopted, with the exception of clause No. 2. After some further discussion the meeting proceeded to the election of officers. Dr. Sutherland was chosen President and an Executive Committee was selected consisting of the following gentlemen—Messrs. Gordon Wigle, D. L. Brethour, O. H. Bishop, W. K. Ireland, A. C. Steele, W. R. Watson, G. E. Armstrong, J. T. Moore, and W. Munns. After a rousing address by the newly-elected President, the Convention adjourned, to meet again at the call of the Executive Council.

Some of the gentlemen who were refused admittance assembled, later, in the office of the CANADA CITIZEN, organized themselves into an impromptu meeting, presided over by Dr. Griffin, and adopted the following resolution, moved by Rev. S. D. Clowin of Spencerville, seconded by W. W. Buchanan of Hamilton—

That we, electors in favor of prohibition party action, and in general sympathy with the platform published by the Provisional Committee, and believing that we constitute a majority of delegates assembled, regret that the conditions of admittance to the convention were of such a character as to prevent us from entering and taking part in the deliberations.

The unfortunate occurrences at Shaftesbury Hall on Wednesday last, reported above, are to be deplored, principally because there will be given by them, to the public, a misleading impression that there is disunion in the ranks of that large section of our temperance electorate who believe that prohibition ought to be a dominant political issue.

There was no dispute about prohibition on the occasion referred to; there was no discussion as to the necessity, desirability or expediency of aggressive, independent political action. There was simply the refusal of a large number of gentlemen to subscribe unqualified assent to a political creed prepared for them by a committee, which, they understood, had been appointed to prepare and report a suitable platform for party organization. The committee had been appointed at a formal although impromptu meeting, and was instructed and expected to report, when its work was performed, but instead of presenting a report to a meeting such as that by which it was constituted, the Committee adopted the plan of reporting to a meeting composed of such persons as would pledge themselves beforehand to accept the platform. At this meeting no discussion of the platform was allowed, but the meeting was asked to go through the farce of formally adopting a platform, although no one was permitted to vote on the question, unless he had previously qualified himself for consideration by unreservedly accepting it.

It must not be imagined that the gentlemen who refused to unconditionally declare their approval of a statement of principles before that statement was discussed, were therefore opposed to the working out of those principles. Many of them did, and

do, endorse all that the platform contains, but some of them did not believe that any two or three should declare themselves so much wiser than all others, that their opinions, and their statement of them must be accepted by all who wished to co-operate in a great and important movement. There has been in our country for a long time a growing feeling of opposition to political "bossism," and a determination among independent men to think and act for themselves, without being compelled to yield mental and civic submission to machine managers. It was utterly absurd to expect that such men should become identified with a proposed political organization which would require of them, at the outset, unconditional acceptance of a statement, drawn up by a few men, as a "basis of political organization."

Moreover, there are men who believe—for example—in "woman suffrage," but do not believe that woman suffrage and prohibition should be necessarily associated in political agitation. There are some prohibitionists who would like to have the co-operation of all other prohibitionists, whether the latter believe in woman suffrage or not, but the methods of the men who called this meeting would shut out from the "New Party" every prohibitionist who was not also a believer in woman suffrage, who was not in favor of retaining the Dominion Senate simply making it elective, and who did not believe that every other clause in the statement submitted must be a plank in the new platform.

There has never, that we know of, been publicly declared in this country, any test of political party allegiance so rigid, so narrow, and presenting so much of the objectionable element of intolerance of free thought and free speech, as this much-to-be-regretted action.

It would be unfair to assume that all the gentlemen who went into the meeting, after subscribing their names to the required declaration, really understood the position in which they had placed themselves; inasmuch as, of those who had subscribed, but not gone in, many, when they recognized the situation, refused to accept it and remained with those who declined to sign the platform.

It would also be unfair to hold all who were assembled in the meeting responsible for the conduct and words of those who spoke so injudiciously and offensively to the gentlemen outside, whose only reason for respectfully questioning the committee's action was a desire to co-operate with their friends in promoting what they believed to be the object of the meeting—the advancement of the cause of Prohibition through political party action. There were in the meeting gentlemen who stand high with all who know them as men of integrity, intelligence and kindness, and who would have been the last to become associated with anything they believed to be narrow in character, unjustly exclusive in its management, or offensive in attitude towards, and treatment of, those who desired to be its sympathizers and supporters.

IN NOVA SCOTIA.

A New Party to be Formed.

A mass convention of prohibition workers has been summoned to meet at Truro, N. S., on the 27th inst. At a meeting held on Feb. 17th, presided over by the Rev. J. H. Coffin, it was decided to call a convention of all favorable to the cause in Nova Scotia, who are in favor of the organization of an Independent Political Prohibition party. The convention promises to be very large. The call for it is signed by a great number of clergymen and other prominent citizens. Our friends who want a new party in Nova Scotia are going about the business they have in hand in a sensible fashion at any rate. We wish them a hearty God-speed in every effort for the suppression of the rum power.

The Alliston Shooting.

LATER reports concerning the shooting case at Alliston make it absolutely certain that the constables who defended themselves were in immediate peril, their lives were threatened, one of them had been struck by a heavy bottle, and they were attacked by a mob, who had taken from them a prisoner, and seemed determined to inflict any bodily injury they could accomplish. The men were obliged to resort to their revolvers to repel that mob of angry assailants. When the facts of the case became known at the preliminary examination, bail was excepted for the constables who were committed for trial. The case will come up for trial about May 1st.

THE HALTON CONTEST.

No Cause for Discouragement.

REV. W. A. MCKAY, of Woodstock, one of our most earnest and effective prohibition workers, recently preached in Chalmers church, a sermon on prayer, and in the course of address he referred to the late Halton contest in the following terms:

"In our day men are gravely discussing whether prayer has power with God. Within the last week or two great shouts of triumph have gone up from certain quarters because of the alleged failure of prayer in Halton. What, we are asked, is the benefit of all your prayers? Look at the county of Halton. The people were divided into two opposing camps. On the one side were, for the most part, the Church and Christian people drawn by an honest and earnest desire to remove from their county a terrible curse. For weeks special prayers were offered for a blessing upon their efforts. Not were these prayers only by the Christian people of Halton. All over this Province there went up earnest prayers for success in the struggle in that county for the home against the bar-room. On the other side were the liquor sellers and the advocates of a licensed liquor traffic. We heard of no prayer being asked or offered on this side. And we will not be so uncharitable as to suppose the liquor men so devoid of a sense of propriety, not to speak of reverence, that they would go through the mockery of asking the blessing of God upon their accused traffic. And yet what was the result? The side with all prayer on it was victorious. And what avail therefore are your prayers, we are asked? Gentlemen restrain your rejoicing. God has many ways of answering prayer. Dr. Arthur S. Pierson was pastor of a large wealthy congregation in Philadelphia. Their church building was one of the most elegant edifices in that great city. But he and his people were doing little or nothing to reach the great host of unsaved souls around them. It pleased God to impress this fact very deeply upon the minds of that pastor and some of his people; and week after week efforts were put forth to reach the masses, but with little result. One night in the prayer meeting the Spirit was present with unusual power, and pastor and people with strong crying and tears besought God to remove any and every obstacle that might hinder the church from effectually reaching the unsaved. The whole people wrestled with God for this purpose. While they were praying their church building was burning and in a few hours the beautiful house was in ruins. Where now, said the skeptic, is the answer to your prayers? But wait and see. God's ways are not our ways. That wealthy congregation had now to worship in the large opera house. This brought them at once into contact with the masses of people outside the churches. A marked blessing was at once bestowed; so that, in the words of Dr. Pierson himself, "more souls were hopefully converted in those sixteen months than during the sixteen previous years of his ministry, and the converts were almost exclusively from those outsiders hitherto unreached." The good work then began is still going on with unabated success. Thus God answered the prayers of his people through trials and disappointments which they least expected; and so still.

To those who cry out that prayer in Halton was a failure we say the end is not yet. God's purposes were not finally disposed of by that vote in Halton on March 1st. He reads the history of moral reform to little purpose who has not learned that temporary defeat only hastens the final victory. As reasonably might the liquor sellers attempt to stem the advancing tide of Prohibition sentiment in this and other lands. One, two, or a dozen victories such as that at Halton, obtained by political trickery, will only render more swift and sure the final overthrow of the traffic. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," said Christ to Peter Peter, however, fell, and I hear some sneering spectator asking what now is the benefit of Christ's prayer. But wait, Mr. Critic, Peter rises again, and his fall has taught him lessons of use to him in all his after life. And so with the cause of temperance in Halton.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again." The lesson from Halton is not one of failure in prayer, but one teaching greater earnestness in prayer and more persistency in effort until the final victory is obtained. The God of Jacob is still on our side. He hears prayer, and the prospect is as bright as His promise is sure.

How Neal Dow Became a Prohibitionist.

If a man wishes to engage in a business that ensures long life, let him become a mild-mannered apostle of prohibition. Here is General Neal Dow now nearly 81, as youthful and fresh as at 40. Sitting in his study in his house at Portland the other night, he told how it happened that he first undertook the big task of abolishing the liquor traffic. "It was," he said, "a good many years ago. I was sitting in this same house one evening quite late. In answering a knock at the door I found a lady whom I knew very well as the wife of a government official in this city. He was a perennial drunkard, and on this very night was down town on a spree. His wife wished me to get him home quietly because if he was drunk the next day he might lose his position. I started out, and found him in the back-room of one of the down town saloons. That was in the days of license in Maine. I said to the keeper in a quiet way, 'I wish you would sell no more liquor to Mr. Blank.' 'Why, Mr. Dow,' he said, 'this is my business, I must supply my customers. That all may be,' I replied, 'but there is this gentleman with a large family depending on him for support. If he goes to his office to-morrow drunk he will lose his place. I wish you would sell him no more.' He became somewhat angry, and told me that he, too, had a family to support, that he had a license to sell liquor to whomever he pleased, and that he didn't care to have me meddling in his business. 'So you have a license, have you?' said I. 'And you support your family by destroying that man's. We'll see about this.' I went home thoroughly determined to devote my life to suppressing the liquor traffic in the best way possible. The Maine law originated in that rum shop." There is a good deal (says the correspondent) that is remarkable about this old gentleman with but one idea. Through business, through the war, and now in his retired life, it has been prohibition and nothing but prohibition with him. "I eat well, sleep well, and never fret," he said, in explaining his youthful old age. "There is lots of youth for the man who doesn't fret," and he lives up to his doctrine. His daily life is very regular, and by sunset he ends his work for the day. He invariably rises at five o'clock, and spends about two hours with his papers, being careful not to miss anything touching his favorite topic. By this time breakfast is ready—a simple meal, without coffee but he does drink tea. He then clears up his correspondence, which amounts to ten or fifteen letters a day. Then comes the regular drive down town. After that he spends a couple of hours with his pen. Just now he is writing a history of the Maine law, which is soon to be published. He spends about four hours a day on this, and after dinner drives and spends the rest of the day in the library with his family. Nine o'clock finds him dreaming of prohibition. — Boston Herald

Woman Suffrage.

MR. WATERS bill to give to unmarried women and widows the franchise for elections to the Local Legislature on the same terms as men, reached the second reading in the Local Legislature on Wednesday afternoon, and was defeated by the significant vote of 30 to 46. The good friends who are pushing this important measure have now the satisfaction of knowing, that nine more converts of Provincial Parliamentarians, would give them this really unobjectionable bill. The following is the vote on the second reading of the bill.

YEAS—Messrs. Allan, Armstrong, Balfour, Bishop, Craghton, Coates, Dick, Drury, Ferguson, Ford, Garsden, Graham, Ingram, Leys, McAneney, McKay, Mack, Maciver, Macintosh, McCallie, Miller, Morin, Ostrom, Robillard, Ross, Ross (Huron), Sprague, Stratton, Waters, Wyllie—30.

NAYS—Messrs. Awtrey, Ballantyne, Bennett, Hirth, Clancy, Clarke (Northumberland), Clarke H. K. (Toronto), Commee, Craig, Dryden, Fell, Fraser, Freeman, French, Gibson (Hamilton), Gibson (Huron), Gilmour, Hammill, Harcourt, Hardy, Hess, Hudson, Korns, Lees, Lyon, McDougall, Master, Meredith, Monk, Morgan, Mowat, Murray, Nairn, Pascoe, Phelps, Preston, Raybould, Ross (Middlesex), Saldier, Stewart, Tooley, Whitney, Wildfield, Wilmut, Wood, (Hastings), Wood (Brant)—46.

Mississiquor Temperance Alliance.

Another Scott Act Campaign.

Mississiquor County Temperance Alliance held a convention last Saturday and resolved to go in for another Scott Act campaign. Our readers will remember that three years ago this county failed to carry the Scott Act, the liquor party winning by the narrow majority of 35. We are glad that the temperance people have not lost heart, and we hope to shortly report another victory for the Province of Quebec.