

been found impracticable and inexpedient. Under the provisions of the License Act they are constantly called upon to hear appeals and determine cases. It is also their duty under the law to hear complaints when the legality of the issue of licenses is called in question, and if the evidence warrants, revoke the action of the Commissioners in granting the license, and punish them or the Inspector for any illegality committed. Under the law Commissioners who are magistrates are prohibited from adjudicating upon cases.

### *Policy in 1897.*

The entire absence of anything like an Opposition policy on the license question under the leadership of Mr. Whitney is indicated by the following extracts from a speech by that gentleman, delivered in the Legislature during the debate on the second reading of the Liquor License Bill, on March 30th, 1897. Mr. Marter, who had spoken previously, had been questioned as to the views of his party on the subject, and the Opposition leader, in the course of his speech, dealt with the matter at some length:

"He wondered at the question that came from the Government benches, which asked why did not the member for North Toronto declare what he would do. In a humorous manner he characterized the muddle that the Government had got into as a peculiar bog, in which the Government were rapidly becoming embedded. He declared that they were calling upon the Opposition to come over and help them out. . . . It was not the purpose of the Opposition to compound a policy for the Government. In the past they had always aided them and helped them out of many serious positions, but that was at an end, and the Government need not in the future look to the Opposition to rectify mistakes for them. . . . The entire question has developed into a triangular affair, the solution of which is apparently a very difficult matter. Because it was difficult it was no reason why the Opposition should step in and untangle the matter, and, furthermore, they did not intend to do so. The Government said the Opposition ought to suggest something. They were in a minority, but if honorable gentlemen wished them to change places with them in advance of time they would cheerfully respond. They (the Opposition) had nothing to do with the matter." (*Mail and Empire* report).

This pitiable confession of weakness and incapacity has been substantially repeated many times by Mr. Whitney in the course of his later platform deliverances. After having boxed the compass and tried every imaginable proposal for a change from the extreme of centralizing the license administration in Ottawa to the opposite expedient of the restoration of municipal control, and seeing them in turn rejected