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Memorandum for the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister may recall the dispute which Mr. Edward Lacroix had with Mr. Casgrain in the matter of taking a local option vote in Beauce County. The Prime Minister's intervention was required to prevent an open break. A new difficulty has now arisen. As a result of the vote authorized in Beauce the Canada Temperance Act was adopted by a large majority and came into force some months ago. The provincial authorities refuse, however, to enforce this Act, claiming that they have nothing to do with this purely federal law.

The federal police have, on the other hand, taken the attitude that the responsibility rests with the provincial police. Mr. Lacroix suggests that there appears to be a conspiracy between the two governments to thwart the wishes of the majority of the people of the country, and that his own position is being made ridiculous. He has seen Mr. St. Laurent, who points out that under the provisions of the Canada Temperance Act, the Collector of Customs is required to prosecute where he has reason to believe that an offence has been committed, and that a conviction can be obtained. The suggestion is that the officers of the R.C.M.P., who are stationed in Beauce County, should act as prosecuting agents for the Collector of Customs, and thus meet Mr. Lacroix's desires for enforcement of the Act.

The Commissioner of Police has pointed out that his force have tried to keep out of enforcing the Temperance Act, except in Marquette and Lisgar, in Manitoba, in which province the R.C.M.P. act as provincial police. Mr. Lacroix contends, however, that the Act should be enforced by someone, and as the federal government is responsible and has the means to do so, it should take action. He expresses the view that one or two test cases would have a very salutary affect. Mr. St. Laurent has expressed his willingness to proceed in the matter, but suggests that as this is a matter of policy involving the possibility of political repercussions, he would like to have an expression of opinion from the Prime Minister.

W. J. T.

* *Mr St Laurent now informs me that Commissioner Wood is prepared to act and the Minister is ready to go ahead.*