

experiment among an earnest minded and resolute people, to put down intemperance, should be received by serious men in very varying aspects. More particular information was evidently needed, and it seemed only reasonable that the friends of prohibition should afford evidence of the beneficial result of the experiment in those countries where the traffic had been suppressed, before they could fairly ask the strong arm of the law to interfere in this Province to break down the evil complained of, and instead of giving its sanction and shield to the traffic, to give it its ban, and society its protection.

4. *Object of a Commission of enquiry to the State of Maine.*

The undersigned was therefore requested to visit several of those states, in which prohibition has become law, to ascertain its results, and to report thereon, and to state his convictions, after examination on the spot, for or against a prohibitory law, and whether or not such a law would be likely to do good, and whether there was any probability of its doing harm. Those philanthropic people who sincerely desire the moral improvement of this young and rising country, and who justly attach great importance to the cause and success of Temperance in Canada, seek only for a salutary and just law, not one that shall outrage the feelings of Society, but a law based on the broad principles of humanity; a law that respects the rights of every one; that respects the health, life, purity, happiness, intelligence and morality of the people; a law at the foundation of which lie those grand and divine prohibitions of all evil—"do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you:" "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

A law agitated in the spirit of faction, or carried in the spirit of faction, could answer no good end, would array society against it, would create dissatisfaction if not disgust, and would constitute itself a great barrier to the success of Temperance, since its basis would be unchristian and repulsive. A law must have the approbation of the moral feelings of Society or it cannot be enforced; for hundreds would connive at its violation, believing it rather a virtue than a crime, for them to transgress.

The question has been again and again asked, what necessity existed for Prohibition? What has been the effect of prohibitory legislation? Are there any statistics touching these points, and illustrative of the benign agency of legal suppression?

Those who were not awayed by mere excitement, or by faction, have felt that it were better to have no law, than to have a law which the conscience of the people would not sustain; that it were better to wait a while and to diffuse information in the meantime upon the subject, than rashly to adopt a law that must prove a failure or cause a reaction; that in fine, if it were ascertained that the law in the neighbouring country had been useless, or had been productive of evil consequences; if it had increased intemperance, if it had created vice and pauperism; if it had resulted in increased iniquity and crime; that, then it was not desirable to introduce the prohibitory experiment into Canada, as its effects were so sad and disastrous. Accordingly, the instructions of the undersigned contained the following paragraph:—"The object of your mission will therefore be to collect all such statistical and other information as shall enable us fairly to judge whether or not the law has had the effect of lessening crime and the other evils of society, and generally of ameliorating the condition of the human family where the law prevails; whether, in short, the law has proved itself to be a blessing or otherwise. Although our object and aim is to promote the passage of a prohibitory law, it is proper when collecting evidence on the subject that

nothing should be concealed as to its working which shall come to your knowledge, even though facts may be ascertained which may fairly militate against such an enactment. In fact, I mean to be understood to take the ground that if it should be ascertained that a law is not calculated to produce happy results to society, we do not want it; and if it is calculated to produce, and does produce such results, we need not fear any facts in connexion with its working."

Such being the Mission, it was expected that the Commissioner would proceed in the spirit of candour to gather statistics on the subject of intemperance in general, that its evils might be more generally known; that he should ascertain the beneficial results of prohibition if such existed; or the evil effects, if such had really been produced; that he should visit such public institutions as Houses of Reformation, State Prisons, Jails and Asylums, and collect all the statistical and documentary evidence in his power; and furthermore, that he should obtain the testimony of men of integrity and distinction, of professional men, of the heads of public institutions, of divines, of legislators, judges and governors; as to the baneful influence or beneficial tendency of the legal prohibition of the traffic in ardent spirits.

In the execution of the onerous and important trust committed to him, the Commissioner visited the states of New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, collecting facts and evidence in the several cities and states through which he passed, and he begs now respectfully to lay the result of his commission before you, in as brief a review as the nature of the subject will admit.

In relation to the Legislative prohibition of the traffic in alcoholic drinks, the questions which had most frequently occurred to the undersigned and for which he sought a satisfactory solution in his late visit to the United States, were the following:—

Division of the Subject.

- I. Whether the evils arising from the traffic in that country were so numerous, and of so gross and iniquitous a nature, as to create a necessity for its absolute prohibition?
- II. Whether the Prohibitory Legislation there, has had a salutary effect in diminishing the evils alleged to arise from the Traffic?
- III. And, thirdly, if so, whether there exists in Canada a similar necessity for the absolute Prohibition of the entire traffic in Alcoholic drinks?

Statement of the Question.

These three questions seem to comprehend all that is essential to be said on the subject; for if there was no necessity arising from the evils of intemperance for Legislative interference, and if that interference has produced only baneful results, then, if this be the case, no one can desire the Legislature of Canada to interfere in the matter; but, if on the contrary, the evils arising from the traffic were of so terrible a character that all preceding and existent laws seemed powerless to repress them, and if the respective Prohibitory Laws have had a salutary effect in other countries in diminishing these evils, then, there can be no doubt that Legislative action will prove as benignant here as there, and will have the same salutary effect. If these three questions can be fairly answered in the negative, prohibition is by no means and in no sense desirable in this country or in any country; but if they can be fairly answered in the affirmative, then there should be perfect unanimity among all parties and classes to obtain the Prohibition of the traffic here by Law. This is a simple issue; it resolves the