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F. S. SPENCE,

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THE CANADA CITIZEN.

The : Canada : Citizen AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

A Journal Devoted to the Promotion of Social Progress and Moral Reform.

Subscription, \$1 a year, strictly in advance.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MARCH 30TH, 1908.

THE NEW PARTY.

We believe in a Prohibition party. Anyone who has been a constant reader of the CANADA CITIZEN for the past four years knows this. Everyone who has been an extensive reader of Canadian newspapers, knows that we have been persistently and mercilessly abused by both Conservative and Reform journals for declaring, what we still believe, that Prohibition will not be an accomplished fact until we have in power a government backed by a dominant political party with Prohibition as its declared policy in relation to the liquor traffic.

That opinion we have never changed. We are not particular about the cognomen of the party that will be representative of the best and most advanced sentiment of our country. We care not whether the result desired be attained through the old Liberal party, the old Conservative party, or a new party combining the best elements of both.

Experience of Scott Act working has confirmed us in the belief that even if we filled our legislatures with Prohibitionists and got a law of total Prohibition, it would disappoint us unless administered by men who are prohibitionists. Our Canadian political system can never give us prohibitionist officials until we have a government holding office because of its prohibitionist principles. This is really only another way of repeating the assertion that we cannot have Prohibition without a Prohibition party.

We believe to-day as firmly as when we said it years ago, that if both Liberal and Conservative parties will persist in standing "in sanctioning silence by the side of the law-protected liquor course and refuse to turn upon it the powerful artillery of their political party machinery, then it becomes the duty of every true temperance patriot, every elector who values principle above mere party prejudice, to speak out in fearless manliness and record the protest of his vote against both of these sin-sustaining organizations.

We did not say all this at a time when it was easy and safe to say it. We stated our views in the face of a general election. We brought upon ourselves the unstinted abuse of representative men of both parties. That made no difference. Our position was sound, and we are thankful that its soundness is being recognized to-day by both temperance men and politicians.

Why, then, did we not hail with satisfaction the action of the gentlemen, who, in Shaftesbury Hall, last week, formed themselves into a new party. Simply because the action then taken was not such action as would either bring about, or facilitate the bringing about, of the results for which temperance workers are striving and praying to-day.

Let no one imagine that we are questioning the sincerity of the promoters of that movement. We believe that they are earnest prohibitionists,

and that their errors were errors of judgment, not of intention. But they failed to fully appreciate the political position of the country; they failed to understand the nature of political organization; they failed to comprehend the spirit and character of Canadian prohibitionists; and they failed to devise plans and methods, through which there might be any hope of uniting and exerting the political power of our Prohibition electorate. The unfortunate result of their action was, to give to the public a misleading idea as to the extent of the movement they professed to represent, and to prevent a manifestation of the real strength of Canadian Prohibition sentiment.

A party cannot be organized around a platform. Men may be so enthused upon a great moral question as to rally around it and make it the central idea of a political organization. But parties are formed on issues, not on detailed policies. When men have become united for the attainment of a definite end, they will necessarily have to deal with other political questions, on which some of them may differ. But in reference to minor matters, these differences of opinion must sometimes be yielded for the sake of general harmony and strength. Out of this necessity, out of the thorough consideration by many minds of all questions requiring decision and action, will grow the platform of the party. The natural order of development then is (1) the issue, (2) the party, (3) the platform. Framing the platform first and forming the party afterwards, is something like furnishing a house before it is built.

Even if the general principle thus stated might safely be ignored, there was a serious blunder in the methods adopted by our friends. The platform was framed, and all who were desirous of becoming identified with the new party, were required to declare approval of it before they would be permitted to consult and co-operate with its framers. No matter how perfect the platform might be, it was going too far to ask independent men to accept it as a basis of political organization, without hearing advanced a single reason for the insertion of the different planks which it contained, and without being informed as to why the particular political questions dealt with, were selected and endorsement of them required to the exclusion of all others. For it must be noticed, that a man who believes in the abolition of the Senate, could not sign this declaration; and a man unwilling to co-operate with the new party, unless it dealt with the important question of taxation exemptions, would have no opportunity of getting into its councils and having his opinions there discussed. Common sense, as well as fair play, and a desire to recognize the inalienable rights of free thought and free speech, should have prevented the carrying out by the committee of the unwise policy which they adopted.

We are of the opinion that there was not a gentleman at Shaftesbury Hall that afternoon who was there in any sense as an antagonist of independent party action. It was expected that the committee appointed last September would present a report, and that the report would be discussed by those who appointed the committee, and those who were sufficiently interested in the proposed movement to attend and take part in the proceedings. Think of a judge inviting a juryman to sign a prepared verdict before he entered the box to hear witnesses and counsel in the case!

Apart, however, from the question of whether or not there should be a platform, and apart from the rightness or wrongness of the committee's proceedings, it may be well to look at the platform as it is, and see how far it meets the requirements of the independent prohibition electorate. And, in the first place, we are sorry to have to point out that the rallying point of the movement—the prohibition plank of the platform—is away behind the

time, and very little, if any, in advance of the celebrated Aylmer speech. The fourth plank declares for "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 suppression of vice and intemperance." The declaration of the Dominion Alliance from its inception has been for "PROHIBITION NOW." By a great majority the House of Commons, composed of strong politicians, has declared for prohibition as the "objective point of temperance legislation." Every political leader who has declared himself on the question of Scott Act enforcement, has declared as strongly for it as does this new platform. We did not expect that the new party would stop short at "the country not ripe" stumbling block.

Let the situation be clearly understood. We want no third party that, like the existing parties, has a "mean-time" policy in dealing with evil. The Electoral Union platform is "the immediate enactment and thorough enforcement of total prohibition." There is no argument for this hanging-back policy, in the theory that we want the Scott Act enforced now, and prohibition as soon as we can get it. A party platform and policy are not for opposition, but for power, and the country is already sick of parties, which, when in power, do less than what they ought to do. An overwhelming majority of the Liberal party in the House of Commons declared some time ago for total prohibition. A large proportion, probably a large majority, declared for immediate prohibition. The same party a few days ago declared for Scott Act amendment, and the same party, being in power in this province, is avowedly and practically in favor of Scott Act enforcement. What is the use of a new party that cannot get ahead of the present parties? The prohibition plank is weak, weak, weak, too weak to hold up even the few temperance men who have undertaken to stand upon it.

Then the platform is defective, that is, as a platform. Think of a political party laying down a scheme of government, for that is what a platform amounts to, without a word in reference to the fiscal policy which it proposes to adopt! Think of a detailed party policy that absolutely ignores the burning question of the relations of capital and labor! Be it remembered we do not believe that it is necessary to have a platform to organize a party. But the party of the future, the party round which the young men, the independent men, the advanced men will rally, will be a party that from its constitution must declare for prohibition now; that must declare and act intelligently in reference to our country's fiscal position, that must denounce and abolish unjust taxation exemptions that have heavily upon those who do most for the country's welfare that will remove unfair burdens from the bone and sinew population of the Dominion, and that will deal definitely with every other public question as well as with the few which the managers of the new party have selected for consideration.

What should we do, then, in reference to this new undertaking? We are sorry that it is not such movement as we can cordially support. We believe that the right kind of a movement in the right direction is coming. In Nova Scotia a call has been issued, signed by a long list of prominent citizens, for a convention to organize a new party. No burdensome conditions of membership are imposed, and no few men have assumed to manufacture a political straight jacket for their brethren. Action of a similar sort in the province of Ontario would have met with an enthusiastic response, the very fact of which would have startled party politicians and resulted in both immediate and permanent good. A Dominion convention will doubtless be held during the coming summer, a convention that will be thoroughly representative in its character, and we trust untrammelled in its utterances and actions. That convention may be relied

upon to voice the advanced and intelligent sentiment of Canadian prohibitionists. Looking forward to that convention we can afford to wait and work earnestly, prayerfully, energetically, and in hope. In the meantime we would warn the old party managers that they will be woefully deceived if they imagine that the meeting in Shaftesbury Hall last week was, in either dimensions or action, anything like a representation of the independent, determined aggressive Canadian prohibition party.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We are anxious to have the fullest ventilation of every subject connected with moral reform, and the columns of the CANADA CITIZEN are open to all who choose to use them for that purpose, provided their communications are of reasonable length, and discuss the subject legitimately. We have no space to spare for personalities or recrimination between our correspondents. Two communications that we publish this week are altogether too long. That signed "Elector" we were obliged to condense, omitting, however only matter that is really not material to the subject discussed. We shall be obliged if our friends will kindly bear these hints in mind. Send us all the letters you like but make them short, say not more than four or five hundred words at the outside, half that number would generally serve the purpose better.

The New Party.

Editor Canada Citizen:

DEAR SIR:—You will oblige me, as I was a member of the provisional committee, by allowing me a few remarks on the subject of the New Party.

In the first place, as a strong supporter of the "New Party," I am very sorry that THE CITIZEN should publish the statement that the New Party Convention, either in the private chamber, or public hall, was an "inhomogeneous gathering." This certainly was not the case, however, strange as it may seem for me to say so. If the parties who came to the hall knew anything, that only such parties were invited as were willing to organize on the basis of the published platform.

And if they were not there a snite on that platform, they were not there by invitation at all. It seems as if any person would have understood this. I am happy to say that a sufficient number were there as a unit, and did complete a splendid organization. The provisional committee had placed the platform before their friends, on both sides of politics, who were men of standing and influence, for nearly the whole winter, in their different localities, and thus the published platform became the product of many, not the few, of the best-minded men of our country. This was done in a confidential way, so that designing parties, could not thwart us in our plans. It was expected that men disguised—in favor of the traffic—would try to get into first convention and try to destroy our platform, which had already been amended probably dozens of times before it was published. This was one of the reasons that each person was requested to either accept the platform "as a basis" to organize on, or remain outside until the next convention was called. Another reason why the platform was not open for discussion was, there was no time in a single afternoon and evening to admit of long airy speeches made by gentlemen, for the simple satisfaction of hearing their own voices. This must have, in most part, prompted the desire for discussion, for the dissenting meeting held in THE CITIZEN office, they all admitted they were in harmony with the platform. Then, why in the name of common sense any one would ask, did they not come in and let every other consideration become secondary to the great object of the fourth plank. If any persons remained outside because of the Woman's Suffrage plank, they are better for the New Party outside than in, for any one must see, if he will, that this plank is indispensable. Women have shown themselves decidedly men's superiors as students, economists, and moralists, in every competition.

And further, it must be seen that every consideration must give way to the fourth plank. Did not those dissenting parties know very well that any discussion of the platform would have ended only in waste of time, as a majority of the parties who did organize would have contended for the platform as published, and neither party would have been satisfied—one wanting a change, and the other no change. The whole afternoon and evening, and days besides, could have been spent to no purpose. The fact is, the discussion which took place respecting the name of the New Party would have run away with the whole day if the matter had not been mutually dropped for the present. It is to be hoped that all friends of Prohibition will see their way clear to let all consideration of other planks in the platform subserve to the grand object of—Prohibition first. It was supposed in the private convention that a part, at least, of those contending in the public hall, were disguised whiskeyites, and