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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

P.O. Drawer 1070, Ottawa
C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

Ottawa, Wednesday, Nov. 12 1902.

The arbitrators appointed to make decision in the great Pennsylvania coal strike are hard at work. How rapidly ideas sometimes move! Within less than ten years some of our Canadian editors were not far from being boycotted because, in certain strikes, they argued for arbitration. "There is nothing to arbitrate." Now, thanks largely to the coal strike and its inconvenient consequences, the idea of arbitration in disputes between labor and capital has taken possession of the public mind. The strike has already paid for itself.

The question of home studies is again up. Very likely many boys and girls are protected, partly, shall we say, by stupidity, and partly by indifference. But what shall be said of those fairly bright and eager students, many of whom are at it practically from 9:00 a. m. until 9:00 p. m.? No wonder so many scholars break down in health, and fall into nervous ailments. No wonder so many leave school resolving to look into books, thenceforth as seldom as possible. The difficulty in educating children in masses is that of tempering the mind to each individual case; but the combination of long school hours with long periods of home study must in most cases be a mistaken policy.

Even those who do not believe in the present practicability of complete prohibition of the liquor traffic, may nevertheless consider it useful and desirable to put the bar-room out of business, for that is what would grow out of a great affirmative vote in the referendum in December. Even more important than the vote referred to, is the great voting—concerted pledge-signing campaign now simultaneously in progress in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. In connection with this subject, one cannot but approve of the plan adopted by many of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Canada, namely the pledging of their young men to abstain from liquor at least until 21 years of age. We know also of many cases where parents have promised to give their sons watches, or sums of money, on condition of abstaining from it.

A MEASURE OF PROHIBITION.

In a short time the people of the Province of Ontario will be called upon to vote on the question of the liquor traffic, and in some way or other another stage in the long controversy, the unending battle will be marked. In the present case a clear issue is set before the people; it is the question of the acceptance or rejection of a definite measure. This measure is believed to be prohibition up to the full extent of the powers of the Province; and each voter must decide whether he thinks that it can be applied so as to improve the social life of the Province. Every man should therefore make himself acquainted with the provisions of the Act, so that he can give an intelligent as well as a conscientious vote. Some might desire that the situation were different, or that something else had been submitted; but the duty of the voter is to decide according to his best light on the issue presented. In this case to abstain from voting is practically to vote against the bill, as the number required cannot be secured if there are many who stay away from the polls. The condition thus attached to the bill is looked upon by many Temperance workers as unfair. We cannot agree with that opinion as a bill of this kind cannot be worked without a good majority; and men who have not strength to walk to the polls will certainly not have strength to support the measure when it has become law. Neither can we endorse the view which suggests that in voting for this bill we rid ourselves of responsibility in regard to the liquor traffic; no matter how we vote, our responsibility will remain to this extent, that we are bound to use all our influence on behalf of soberness and righteousness.

It is idle, at present, to discuss the question as to the relative merits of legislation and moral suasion in dealing with the traffic in strong drink. The one question before us is, are we willing that a particular form of legislation now proposed shall come into force as soon as possible?

We believe that the majority of those who read THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN will answer, Yes. They are clearly within their legal and moral right in doing so; and while one man has no right to dictate to another how he shall vote, men are free to use all fair influence of reason and example. There is one thing clear, namely, that the bar room is an evil and a danger; and if it can be restrained by legal means much good will be accomplished. Another thing is also certain, that this can only be done if the great body of Temperance workers agree to sink minor differences and use their power constantly and consistently to promote temperance in all its forms.

Much ado, has been made over the aberrations, we trust only temporary, of a small proportion of the Doukabours, in the North-West. These Doukabours might be called Russian Quakers. They are a simple-hearted, honest, industrious people; but ill-instructed, unused to liberty, and consequently liable to become the prey of the fanatical exhortations of blind leaders of the blind. There is no need for alarm. We regard the Doukabours as fine raw material of humanity. Give

them a little time—to become Canadianized, and their children, if not themselves, will help to build up a happy and united Canada. "Wait a little; all will come right."

THE "SANCTITY OF AN OATH."

In a recent issue the Mail and Empire had a sober, sensible article on this subject, pointing out the different degrees of perjury that had been exhibited in the courts recently, and the penalties inflicted. With its particular political application we have not now to deal, save to remark that whenever it is proved that men have been engaged in the nefarious work of deliberately trying to pervert justice they should be severely punished. There is, perhaps, not much satisfaction in setting one form of social evil against another, and we are all prepared to admit that the use of strong drink produces many forms of evil; but it is the deliberate judgment of many sober, patriotic men that the most patent evil in Ontario is that of political corruption. This evil shows either a low state of morality on the part of men who are engaged in public affairs, or a double standard which permits them to do things in public affairs that they would scorn in private business. Either of these things is bad and demands the earnest attention of thoughtful men. This thing cannot be confined to Parliamentary elections; it will affect all kinds of voting, and all forms of administration. Long ago the prophet, Zechariah, promising peace to Jerusalem, laid down this condition: "Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath; for 'all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.'"

Surely these words are not out of date. "In a case of this kind, which has just been decided by the Quebec Court of Appeals, a false witness was sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. He sought to invalidate the judgment on the ground that, though there had been false swearing, there had technically been no perjury, because the violated oath was administered by a court that had no jurisdiction to try the case. The conviction was, however, sustained by a majority of the Court of Appeal, who took the position that to swear falsely is to commit perjury both morally and legally."

It is not likely that this curse will be crushed out without stern justice of that kind. If a few of the corrupt constituencies were disfranchised for a period, as was done in England years ago, and a number of the bribers and perjurers sent to the penitentiary, the law would be vindicated and the moral sense of the community quickened. The subject needs to be dealt with, not from the point of party interests but from the standpoint of real morality.

In an article on "The Inordinate Love of Sport," the London (G. B.) Presbyterian says: "The most besetting sin of sports is the tendency to excessive indulgence therein, to the sacrifice alike of health, time and duty." The same paper regards the growing practice of betting as "a dire evil." This view has been frequently pointed out by THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.