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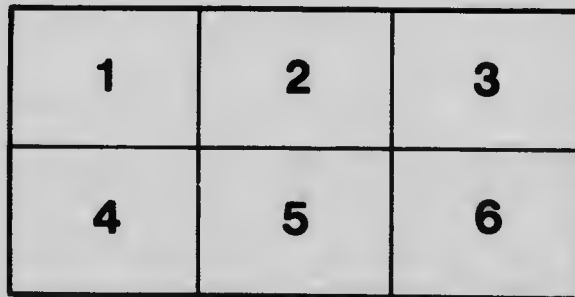
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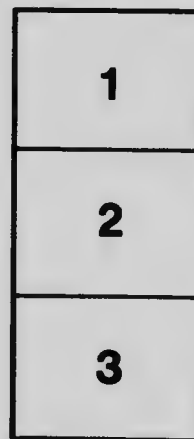
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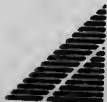
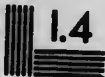
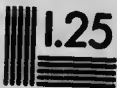
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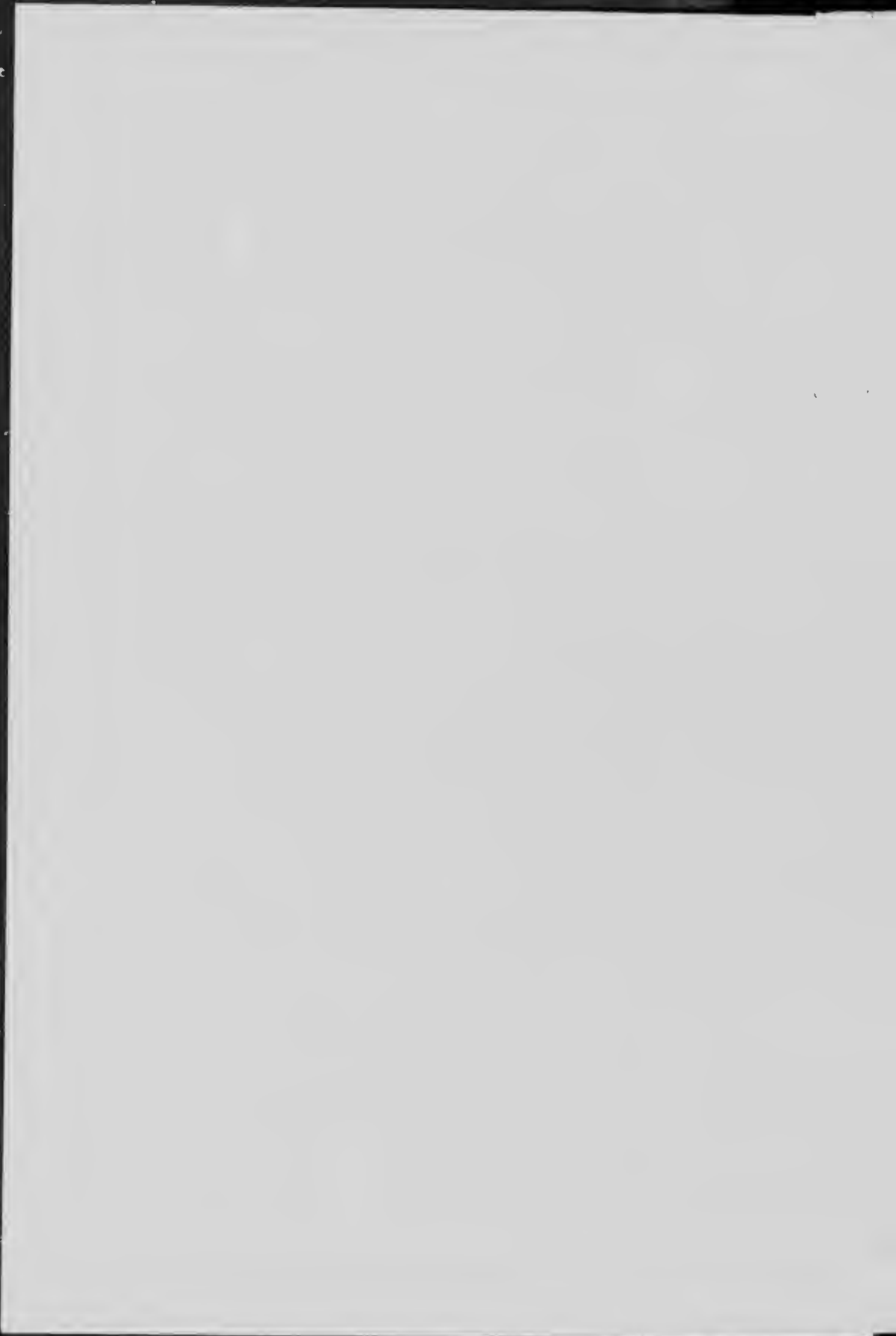
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REPLY

OF THE

HON. G. W. ROSS

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TO THE

Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the
Ontario Branch of the Dominion
Alliance.

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REPLY
OF THE
HON. G. W. ROSS

TO THE
Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the
Ontario Branch of the Dominion
Alliance.

The Executive Committee of the Ontario branch of the Dominion Alliance without any apparent authority from the body which it assumes to represent has issued a manifesto, which, on public and personal grounds, calls for a reply.

In order to justify its appeal to the public the Alliance attempts to fasten upon the Liberal party, through its leaders in Parliament, the charge of broken pledges as a reason for the withdrawal of public confidence, and cites the statements made by Sir Oliver Mowat, the Hon. A. S. Hardy, and myself as a warrant for its denunciation.

SIR OLIVER'S PLEDGE.

Let us look at these pledges in detail:—(1) Sir Oliver Mowat's pledge, is as follows: "If the decision of the Privy Council should be that the Province has jurisdiction to pass a prohibitory liquor law as respects the sale of intoxicating liquor, I will introduce such a bill in the following session, if I am then at the head of the Government."

This pledge evidently referred to the "total prohibition" which the Privy Council afterwards declared was beyond Provincial jurisdiction. ✓

The second part of the pledge is as follows: "If the decision of the Privy Council is that the Province has jurisdiction to pass only a partial prohibitory law, I will introduce such a prohibitory Bill as the decision will warrant, unless the partial prohibitory power is so limited as to be ineffective from a temperance standpoint." ✓

Prohibition to the extent indicated in this portion of Sir Oliver's pledge was declared by the Privy Council to be within the jurisdiction of the Province. Whether it could be made effective "from a temperance standpoint" was a question Sir Oliver was never called upon to consider, as he retired from public life before the decision was given. To this pledge I was a party as a member of the Government and felt bound by it, as I was also a party to its renewal by Mr. Hardy, and since I assumed the leadership of the party, I accepted the responsibility which the pledge imposed upon me by re-affirming it and declaring the Government had not receded from its former position.

HAS THIS PLEDGE BEEN BROKEN?

Now the question is have I broken my pledge? What Sir Oliver Mowat promised was, "I will introduce such a prohibitory Bill as the decision of the Privy Council will warrant." As proof of my fulfilment of this pledge I refer the Alliance to the Statutes of 1902, Chapter 33, where they will find an Act embodying every provision with regard to the sale of intoxicating liquors which the Privy Council declared was within the jurisdiction of the Province. True, it was "partial prohibition," but it was all we had ✓ the power to pass and not one jot of that power was abated by the Government. It cannot, therefore, be argued that Sir Oliver Mowat's pledge, which I had assumed, was broken in any particular, and those who make the charge do so in a spirit of unfairness which I do not care to characterize.

But here my critics claim because the Bill was submitted to a Referendum Sir Oliver Mowat's pledge, which I had assumed, was broken. This I deny. True, Sir Oliver made no reference to the submission of prohibitory legislation to a popular vote for confirmation; in fact reading his pledge in conjunction with the preliminary remarks on the occasion on which it was given, as well as his subsequent remarks elsewhere, it does not appear that he had any intention of asking a ratification of the Act by way of referendum.

DID SIR OLIVER DECLARE AGAINST A POPULAR VOTE?

In the absence of any express declaration, however, to the contrary, how could I be charged with breaking a pledge which Sir Oliver had not made and which nobody could therefore assume on his behalf? And though I did not feel at liberty to refuse prohibitory legislation in view of his pledge and my own, I felt at perfect liberty to refer the whole question to the people, as I did on the 4th December, 1902. Moreover, was I not ✓ justified in this course by the policy of the Liberal party since Confederation? In 1878 we had the Scott Act, which became operative in Counties by the votes of the electors. In 1894 Sir Oliver Mowat took a Plebiscite on the question of prohibition. In 1898 a vote was taken under the present

Liberal Government at Ottawa to ascertain the public opinion of the whole of Canada on the question. I had, therefore, the example of three great leaders of the Liberal party, the Hon. A. McKenzie, Sir Oliver Mowat, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier in justification of the course I pursued, that is "Government by the people, for the people and through the people." And so, not only was there no pledge to stand in my way, but there were the strongest precedents to justify my course. This is my answer to the charge of "broken pledges."

ARBITRARY AND UNFAIR.

We then have the statement of members of the Alliance Executive with regard to the Referendum. They say:—

"The arbitrary and unfair requirement for the ratification of the Act was not, however, fully met . . . The promises of advanced legislation therefore remain unfulfilled."

What these "arbitrary and unfair" requirements were is not stated. I assume, however, from former criticisms that they refer to the majority required to put the Act into operation and to the time fixed for polling. Both of these objections were fully discussed at the time and I still adhere to the views then expressed, that in a measure so revolutionary as prohibition its adoption by a bare majority of the votes polled would be no guarantee that public opinion was sufficiently advanced to make it effective. With regard to the date of polling I held then, and still hold, that in a matter of such vast importance, and in which a whole Province was concerned, it was not at all unreasonable to separate the question of prohibition from municipal politics and all other questions, when the people were called to vote upon it. Indeed, this seemed to be the view of both parties in the Legislative Assembly, as the Journals of the House show. When the Bill was passing through its final stages Mr. Marter moved that "it should become operative by a majority of the votes cast." Out of eighty members present only three voted with Mr. Marter and when it was proposed to take the date of the municipal elections, out of seventy-nine members present only four voted for the change. If these are the requirements referred to as "arbitrary and unfair," then the whole Legislative Assembly, with the exception of four members, were partners with me in my offence.

THE LIBERAL CONVENTION.

This brings me down to the great Liberal Convention which assembled in Massey Hall on the 23rd and 24th of November. And here let it be noticed that this was not a temperance convention. It was a gathering of the Liberals of the Province representing all classes of the people duly elected or appointed for the purpose of considering any question of a Provincial character on which the Liberal party might consider proper to declare

itself. It represented the best elements of citizenship and might fairly be trusted to deal in a broad-minded and statesmanlike manner with every question of practical politics. Temperance men had no more right to expect a special deliverance from the Convention on temperance than labor men on labor, than educationists on education, or than farmers on farming, etc. To have placed itself in the hands of those who advocates of any form of special legislation would have been to weaken if not destroy its influence. The wide sweep of the resolutions adopted is the best evidence of its capacity.

It appears, however, that the Alliance expected "that the Liberal Convention would take such advanced steps as would secure the fulfillment of the pledges that had been given on temperance," and so the request of the Alliance for legislation to abolish the bar, the treating system and drinking in saloons was referred to the Committee on Resolutions and after a brief discussion was rejected. Later, after much debate, a "report was adopted by the committee, one clause of which was agreed to as a compromise (that is clause 3) and approved by a vote that was almost unanimous." This clause was rejected by the Convention, although the other five clauses of the report were adopted.

Now, may we not fairly ask here if the views of the Alliance as to the closing of bars and shops, etc., did not prevail with the Committee on Resolutions, composed of 100 persons appointed by the Convention, how could the Alliance expect its views to prevail in a convention of 4,000? Or if the Alliance could not carry its compromise resolution in an intelligent and thoroughly representative convention of 4,000, how does it expect to prevail in an electorate of over 600,000? But this is by no means the most objectionable attitude of the Alliance. In blaming the Liberal party in Convention for the non-acceptance of what it calls a "compromise resolution," it entirely ignores the declaration of the Convention on other aspects of advanced legislation. Because it failed in getting all it wanted it gives no credit for what was so heartily and unanimously conceded.

POINTS IN LIBERAL PLATFORM.

Let me recapitulate some of these points, and let their significance be noted:—

In clause one of the report, the Convention declared itself in favor of five important changes, viz.:—

- ✓ 1. Of any legislation which affords a well-grounded hope of restraining and curtailing the drinking habit.
2. Reducing the consumption of intoxicating liquors.
3. Closing drinking resorts.
4. Preventing the sale of liquors on Sundays and during prohibited hours.
5. The most rigorous enforcement of the license law in every particular.

These five items of clause one were adopted with practical unanimity by the Liberal party and, although they are vital to the moral interests of the whole community and to the temperance cause, the Executive of the Alliance passes them over with apparent indifference. Is there anybody sincerely interested in advanced legislation who will be found approving of their course?

Then let us see what clause two affirms.

1. It recommends that municipalities have power to close bars and shops under what is known as Local Option by a vote taken on the petition of twenty-five per cent. of the ratepayers, without reference to the municipal council.

2. That Government control might be substituted for the present license system in the case of shops.

3. That municipalities should have the power by Local Option to shorten the hours in which liquors could be sold.

4. That the electors of any municipality, by vote, might reduce the number of licenses. (This power is in the hands now of the License Commissioners.)

Here we have four recommendations, each of which is advanced legislation of the most striking character. I know of no other Province with legislation so advanced as is here proposed, and yet the Executive of the Alliance passes over it in silence.

In clause four it was provided:—

1. That no new licenses should be issued in unorganized Ontario for all time to come.

2. That the Government should take charge of the necessary sales for medicinal purposes.

3. That in granting land for hotel sites in New Ontario it should be stipulated that no liquor should be sold in them.

Here we have again three important provisions dealing with the great heritage of undeveloped Ontario which we expect to open up within the next few years in regard to which the Convention distinctly said "(1) That the number of hotels shall not be increased"; and (2) "that where new hotels are required they shall have no license for the sale of liquors."

This the Alliance passed over also in silence. In clause five it is provided:—

1. That no new licenses shall be granted in license municipalities except on the petition of fifty per cent. of the municipal electors of the polling subdivision where it is desired. And

2. That a license-holder shall forfeit his license for a second offence.

FOURTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS.

Summing up; these fourteen recommendations, would if carried out by legislation and enforced, open up a new era in temperance and

moral reform. But because clause (3) of the Committee on Resolutions was not adopted, the whole finding of the Convention is at fault.

Now what does clause (3) say? Here it is: "That in each municipality a vote be taken at the municipal elections of 1906 on the two questions—the abolition of the bars and the abolition of shop licenses, the result to be decisive and to go into effect at the expiration of the then outstanding licenses, and that all necessary legislation be introduced in the meantime to enable this to be done. In municipalities in which licenses are continued a similar vote may be taken at any time after three years."

ANALYSIS OF CLAUSE 3.

Analysing this clause, it provides:—

(1) For a compulsory vote on Local Option in January, 1906. This was considered by the Convention as unnecessary, because it was already provided by clause (2) that on the petition of twenty-five per cent. of the ratepayers a vote may be held. Having given them permission in clause (2), why add compulsion in clause (3)? Cannot the people be trusted to move in favor of abolishing the bars and shops when full power is given them to do so? Is the wish of the Alliance to be substituted for the free will of the people as expressed by this great Convention? Who would say that this is "advanced legislation" that has any regard for popular government?

Clause (3) further provides that a vote so taken shall be decisive. By that I understand was meant that it should be permanent—permanency meaning not repealable unless Parliament in its wisdom thought fit, after an experience of some years, to give the electors the privilege of affirming or withdrawing their former decision.

This provision is not so objectionable. Every step taken in correcting abuses and preventing injury to public morals should be made permanent, and in voting for the abolition of bars and shops much good would ensue if the electors felt that they were not merely trying an experiment but declaring themselves irrevocably in favor of what was a sound principle of public morality. My objection, therefore, to the attitude of the Alliance regarding clause (3) is that instead of Local Option, which means the will of the people, they are substituting Provincial compulsion for accomplishing what may be good legislation, but which in its operation would be resented by the electors in many cases, and consequently would detract from the ultimate success of the temperance movement.

REGRETS OF ALLIANCE.

And now we come to the regrets of the Executive Alliance:—Regret 1: "This Executive regrets that after careful and serious consideration it is forced to the conclusion that the rejection by the Convention of this resolution dispels all hope that may have been entertained that this Administration would endeavor to redeem the pledges quoted."

Is this regret well founded? Is all hope dispelled because one clause out of six of the report of the Committee on Resolutions was rejected? I have already shown that fourteen propositions of incalculable value remain. Do these count for nothing? In fact there is so little real advantage in the resolution rejected that the platform may be said to be complete without it. As a temperance plank it was entirely unnecessary, and as a political plank it committed the party to nothing more than permanence in the adoption of Local Option, and permanence is quite practicable even without the adoption of clause (3) as there is nothing to hinder municipalities; every time the question is submitted to them, to vote in favor of it. Instead of all hope being dispelled by dropping clause (3), nothing is lost of substantial value to advanced legislation.

Regret 2: That the Premier and Mr. Gibson acquiesced in the decision of the Convention, and more particularly that the Premier expressed himself "as delighted with the Convention's decision on the temperance question."

And so he was and rightly, because he was the first Premier of the Province who ever saw the great party of which he is leader in Convention assembled declare itself in favor of advanced temperance legislation. In 1894 he declared himself delighted with Sir Oliver Mowat's pledges, though made on his own responsibility and without any mandate from his party. Why should he not be delighted when the whole party, though not declaring itself in favor of prohibition as Sir Oliver did, nevertheless authorized him, should he have the opportunity, to legislate on temperance to an extent far beyond the limits of previous legislation. And I venture to say that thousands of temperance men are equally delighted with the Premier in regard to the action of the Convention. Strong men in public life, and men of experience, do not despair because here and there they fail in reaching their ideals. If the citadel cannot be taken, hold fast to the outposts and its ultimate surrender is certain.

CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM.

Now where so little was done by the Liberal Convention in the opinion of the Executive of the Alliance, let us see what was proposed by the Conservative Conference. Lest there should be any mistake on this point I quote the resolution of the Conservative Conference:—

Moved by Mr. John George, ex-M.P.P., Port Elgin,

Seconded by Dr. T. E. Kaiser, Oshawa:

"That this Conference, in recognizing that abuses exist in connection with the liquor traffic, places itself on record as being in full sympathy with all well-directed efforts to promote temperance and moral reform."

NO PARTISANSHIP.

Is it not rather strange that the Alliance, which disavows partisanship

"A monster of such hideous mien

That to be hated needs but to be seen,"

would hurl its complaints at the Liberal Convention and the Liberal Premier and his colleagues, while laying the foundations for future legislation of the most substantial character and yet pass in silence the barrenness of the legislation of the Conservative party? Charity would say it was purely an oversight on the part of the Executive, and, acting charitably, I am bound so to consider it.

Let me also notice in this connection that although Mr. Whitney in his opening address re-affirmed his desire to reduce the number of licenses and to secure a better enforcement of the law, the Conference passed over in silence his declaration in this regard and left itself free and the Conservative party free, so far as the Conference was concerned, to do nothing in the way of legislation. It was "in full sympathy with all well-directed efforts," but what these efforts should be the Conference would not say. A very non-committal position to take.

TRIPLING OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Regret 3. The Government, the Executive says, has trifled with the great temperance question, although in a previous part of the report the Executive has admitted in the following terms that "under Liberal leadership the Ontario Legislature had enacted important measures reducing the number of liquor licenses and imposing upon the traffic many useful restrictions of much benefit to the country in the curtailment of the liquor evil."

But has the Government trifled with the temperance question? Let the legislation of the past few years be my answer, and for this purpose I need not go any farther back than the amendments to the License Act made during the Session of 1897, the principal features of which are as follows:—

✓ (1) The ratio of population to each license was increased, so that for the first one thousand of a population only three tavern licenses could be issued, instead of four, and above the first thousand, one license for every six hundred of population, instead of four hundred. The effect of this was to cut off 154 licenses at the end of the license year.

(2) All hotels were closed at 10 o'clock in townships, villages and unorganized territory and at 11 o'clock in cities and towns. Before 1897 there were no fixed hours for closing hotels in thirty-seven out of the ninety-seven license districts in the Province, and in these cases hotels were often open all night. The power of still limiting the hours of sale was left in the hands of Boards of Commissioners.

(3) The sale of liquor to minors was prohibited, the age limit being raised from 18 to 21 years.

(4) License holders were prohibited from allowing minors to loiter on their premises.

(5) Saloon licenses were abolished.

(6) No licenses could be granted to premises within three hundred yards of a church, school, university or any other educational institution.

(7) Provision was made for preventing the issue of licenses in a residential district.

(8) Druggists were prohibited from selling liquors, except upon a medical certificate, and then not more than six ounces could be sold.

(9) Licenses were forfeited for three several convictions, on different days, within a period of two years, and the licensee disqualified from holding a license for three years.

Besides these amendments to the License Act, provision was made for instruction in temperance and hygiene in the public, separate, normal and model schools of the Province, and in 1902, 194,459 children of the public schools were enrolled in this subject. That surely is not a sample of trifling, or was the Liquor Act of 1902 a sample of trifling, which was the strongest measure of prohibition which the Legislature could pass.

Again let me ask was it trifling with the temperance question when the Liberal Party adopted legislation in 1876, which resulted in reducing the number of licenses from 6,185 to 2,899, in the face of a large increase in the population?

ADVICE OF ALLIANCE.

The Alliance then advises "that temperance men or that temperance men in every constituency take immediate steps to secure the nomination and election of a candidate who can be relied upon to do all in his power to secure effective temperance legislation, at the earliest possible opportunity and who will hold himself absolutely free from party dictation in relation to such legislation and to secure the defeat of any candidate who does not comply with these requirements."

This means (1) that every Liberal candidate who does not declare himself in favor of the policy of the Executive of the Alliance must be defeated either directly by the votes of the followers of the Alliance or indirectly by the nominating of some other candidate who will command the support of the Alliance. And such candidate is to hold himself absolutely free from party dictation in relation to temperance legislation, which means of course that he is to be amenable to the dictation of the Alliance, no matter what his views may be on education or on the future development of the country.

Or perhaps it is the object of the Executive to form a third party on the basis of prohibition. If so it might be well for the Executive to read the history of third parties on this and many other subjects. As a rule the existence of such parties is brief and fruitless and oftentimes hurtful to the cause for which it was organized.

DANGERS OF MANIFESTO.

Before closing, may I ask the members of the Executive if they have seriously considered the possible effect of their manifesto?

1. I think it will not be disputed that while there are many Conservatives who are zealous and honest in the promotion of temperance, the great majority of temperance advocates are to be found in the ranks of the Liberal party. Will not the manifesto of the Alliance, directed as it is almost if not quite exclusively, against Liberals, be regarded as so unfair and offensive as to alienate their good-will at a serious crisis in the history of the temperance movement. Liberals do not believe that their leaders have broken their pledges or proved recreant to their professions as temperance men, and to lose the sympathy of the Liberals, whether the Government is defeated in the general election or not, will inevitably re-act upon the temperance movement. It is well known that the conduct of some so-called temperance leaders in 1902 was not helpful during the referendum campaign. History sometimes repeats itself: If it should be so, will the Executive of the Alliance be free from blame?

2. The Liberal Convention, as I have shown, has put itself on record in favor of advanced legislation in regard to some matters of supreme importance to temperance reform. The Conservative Conference has declared for nothing except sympathy. To defeat the Liberal party is to destroy the party that has already given all the temperance legislation now on the statute book, as stated by Mr. F. S. Spence at the Convention. To place the Conservative party in power is to give position to a party from which no temperance legislation has ever come and which even when public expectation is so keen will give no assurance as to its intentions.

3. Is it not quite evident that the Alliance, originally founded to unite all temperance workers, will, by the policy which it is now pursuing in the pending election, be found to be in alliance with the various forces opposed to temperance? Nothing will please the enemies of temperance more than to see the Liberal ranks divided. Every vote cast for a third candidate is a vote against advanced temperance legislation. It would not surprise me in the least, should the policy of the Executive prevail, to see a license victualler and a member of the Executive on the same platform, the one denouncing the Liberals because they went too far and the other because they did not go far enough.

MY MOTIVES MAY BE CHALLENGED.

Now, it will be said that my sole motive in this somewhat lengthened reply is to save my party from defeat. Admit the motive, if you will, but it cannot be said that it is an unworthy motive. The Liberal party, like any other human organization, has its imperfections, but it has nothing to fear on account of its record on temperance or any other public question in comparison with any other party. It has a good defence for its temperance legislation and it has no apology to make for its inability to proceed more rapidly or to legislate more comprehensively than it has done. And now perhaps more hopefully than for many years back it looks forward with confidence to be able to make further progress through the opportunities presented by the platform adopted by the Liberal Convention.

But I trust my motives are not purely political. Amidst many pressing public duties I have frequently spoken and written on behalf of temperance, and hope to do so still, notwithstanding the doubts cast upon my sincerity and the imputations upon my personal honor. If the Executive of the Alliance had not singled me out for animadversions which I owed it to myself to repel, or had they not singled out the Liberal party, which has so long given me its confidence, for the purpose of destroying its usefulness I would have treated their manifesto as legitimate criticism. I have no doubt that in the main the Executive of the Alliance sincerely believe in the wisdom of the course they are pursuing, but they cannot complain if as the custodian of my own honor and to a certain extent of the honor of the Liberal party I shall repel their assaults, expose their unfairness and call upon the electors of the Province to sustain the policy of the Liberal party against all hostile combinations, no matter by whom made or under what auspices they are launched upon public attention. There were brave men in Greece before the days of Agammemon and there are good, honest men in the temperance ranks who cannot subscribe to the manifesto of the Alliance and who will not be driven to destroy the work of the last twenty-five or thirty years on the manifesto of a Committee who claim to speak for an organization whose membership has not been consulted.

TORONTO, 1 FLEMING PLACE,
Dec. 9th, 1904.

