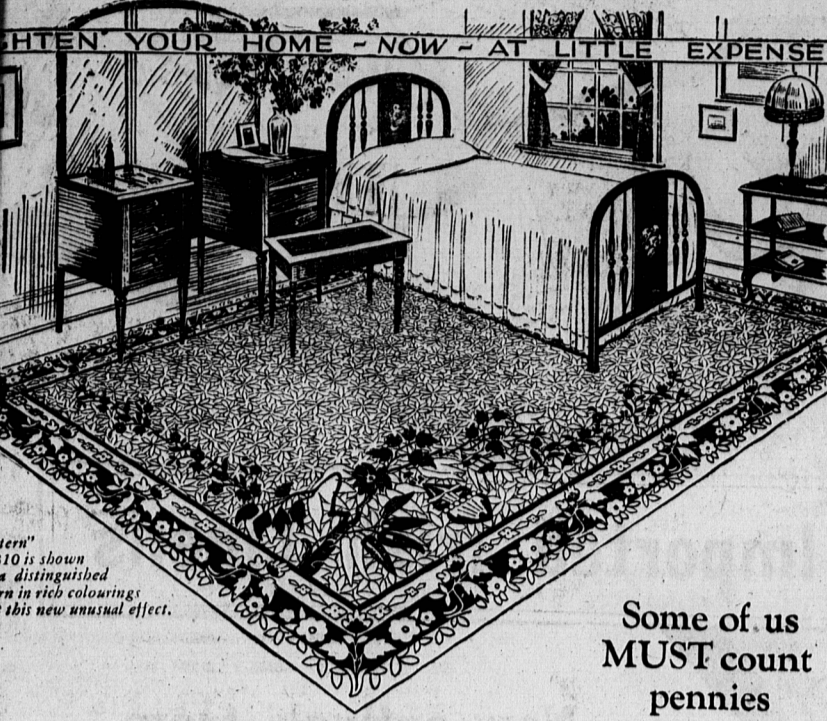


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Temperance Alliance

Continued From Page 5

Rev. Mr. MacLeod.

In the attack made by Premier Saunders upon the President of the Alliance and myself there are certain things stated about which I am sure, and Mr. Bentley, have personal knowledge. If I allow such statements, where correct, to remain unanswered, injustice will be done, not merely to myself and Mr. Bentley, but to the Alliance and the cause of temperance.

Mr. Saunders, for instance, refers to matters which took place at a meeting in Summerside in March 1927, at which Mr. Bentley was not present. The Premier declares that a delegation consisting of "at least twenty to twenty-five of the outstanding business and temperance men of the Town of Summerside" waited upon Mr. Saunders at his house. Mr. Saunders adds, "They were so impressed with my sincerity in this connection that on the following morning the Rev. A. A. MacLeod came to my office and congratulated me on the manly stand I had taken the night before."

What happened on that occasion was this: I was in Summerside arranging to obtain financial help for the Alliance. A committee representing several churches met at my request after the church services of the day were over. In discussing the financial arrangement a question was raised, "Where does the Liberal Party stand on the Temperance Question? If the Alliance is to stand alone in fighting for Prohibition that will affect our financial objective." I was unable to speak for the Liberal Party as I did not know where they stood. Some one suggested that we ask Mr. Saunders to come over to our meeting. This was agreed to. I telephoned Mr. Saunders. He declined to come. I then asked him if the committee might call upon him at his house. He consented. The committee which consisted of seventeen persons, including myself, called on Mr. Saunders at twenty-five" as now stated by Mr. Saunders) accordingly went to Mr. Saunders at his home, and the conference took place there. We discussed the temperance situation at very considerable length. No result was arrived at that evening.

Every member of the committee urged in the strongest way possible that Mr. Saunders declare to us that his party would stand by the Prohibition Act. At the beginning of the interview Mr. Saunders said that he was personally in favor of Prohibition, and that we need have no doubt of his own personal views. The committee, however, insisted that Mr. Saunders should speak for his party as well as for himself, in answering the committee's question. Mr. Saunders answered that he did not wish to make the mistake that Premier Stewart had made in declaring his policy without consulting his party. I replied to this, "There is nothing for you and your party to lose, Mr. Saunders. There is only one course open to you." Mr. Saunders smiled at my statement and replied, "Oh, no, Mr. MacLeod, there are at least three policies which we could adopt." I said, "What are they?" He replied, "Well, one policy would be that of Premier Stewart himself. We could promise the people that if elected we would give them the system of Government Control as Premier Stewart was advocating. We would thus remove the whole issue from politics, and I believe we could beat Stewart on his record. Or we could adopt a policy of the sale of light wine and beer, and perhaps win on that. Or we could adopt Prohibition." I said, "I say again, Mr. Saunders, there is only one policy for you to adopt and I'll tell you why." I then proceeded to point out the position the Temperance Alliance occupied on the question, and what they proposed to do to save Prohibition. I said, "We are Scotch, Mr. Saunders, and we are going to lie down and let the steam-roller of Government Control go over us without a fight. We will bring out a third party, if necessary. This will no doubt mean that the Conservative Party will win; it will certainly mean your defeat, but we may win enough seats to hold the balance of power and perhaps prevent Government Control. We certainly intend to take that stand if the Liberal party does not adopt Prohibition." Mr. Saunders then seemed to realize the serious position his party would be in if they failed to support Prohibition, and promised to do all he could to win his party to Prohibition. He added, "The fact is, gentlemen, I want to be Premier of the province. I want to win the election. It is my conviction that the party winning this election will, in view of the increased subsidy, be in power for the next fifteen years." No decision, however, was arrived at that night, nor was any promise made as to when an answer would be given.

The next morning word came to me that Mr. Saunders wished to see me in his office. I accordingly called to see him.

In his speech in the Legislature the Premier states: "They (meaning the committee) were so impressed with my sincerity in this connection that on the following morning (meaning Monday morning) the Rev. A. A. MacLeod came to my office and congratulated me on the manly stand I had taken the night before."

I did not call upon Mr. Saunders that Monday morning for the purpose of congratulating him on the manly stand he had taken the night before. In fact, I never congratulated Mr. Saunders on the stand he had taken that Sunday night. My call upon Mr. Saunders that Monday was made in response to his request. During that Monday morning's interview Mr. Saunders told me that the party would adopt Prohibition as their policy. I then congratulated him on the decision, pledged the support of the Temperance Alliance, and said that we would make every effort to bring about the success of the Prohibition Party.

some of the changes he would make in the Act if his party were elected. I then asked him to put the details of his proposition in writing, so that I might submit it to the Alliance. He there and then dictated his proposals to his stenographer, and asked her to strike off a number of copies for the use of the Alliance. These I received and distributed on Tuesday in Charlottetown. A copy of these proposals was published in the November Bulletin. I was naturally jubilant that the Liberal party had agreed to stand by and improve the Act. This relieved the Alliance from the very great duty of forming an independent Temperance Party.

Mr. Saunders now says that the paper he handed me as the policy of his party never received the approval of his candidates, but on the contrary was repudiated by them. I was never informed of that fact. All I possessed during the early part of the campaign to convince the people at the meetings I addressed that the Liberal party had adopted Prohibition was the document I had received from Mr. Saunders. On one occasion I complained to Mr. Saunders of this fact. He replied, "You have the policy, use that." I carried the document with me to every meeting, and used it wherever it was necessary to convince electors regarding the policy of the Liberal Party. Naturally the part promising the reduction in doctors' certificates was referred to at many meetings.

I shall not attempt to follow the Premier's lengthy speech and deal with the many inaccuracies he has made regarding myself and Mr. Bentley. One matter, however, I feel compelled to refer to, not because of its inaccuracy, but because I believe it has some foundation in fact.

After referring to the numerous points of difference which he alleged existed between his own party and the Alliance on the one side, and the President and Secretary of the Alliance on the other, the Premier declares, "Unfortunately there is a difference over this one little matter, (meaning the doctors' certificates), but it is a personal question between the President and the Temperance Alliance, and not between the Government and the Temperance Alliance. I believe the Temperance Alliance are behind me in connection with this very matter." The Premier declares he had spoken to at least "eight or ten or a dozen" clergymen in this connection, and says, "They all tell me the same story."

Referring to the proposed Commissioners nominated by the Alliance, and who had received the approval of every one of the Alliance committees concerned, except Mr. Tanton—the Premier, after referring to his refusal to appoint the Alliance nominees, says, "The Temperance people of this province—at least a dozen clergymen, have complimented us on the stand we took in that regard, and said we had saved the situation by substituting our own men in place of those men who had been suggested to us." To this the Premier adds, "I believe the Temperance people of this province are behind every single thing we did in that regard."

In announcing what I had always understood to be the Liberal party's promise to reduce the doctor's certificates to twenty-five per month, and in the part I took in securing what I regarded to be satisfactory nominations for the position of Commissioners, I acted sincerely and up to the measure of my knowledge and ability throughout. In the matter of the selection of Commissioners I was wedded to no particular appointments. I merely desired to have the best men selected in the interests of temperance. I did, however, have the Premier's promise made to me on several occasions previous to the election, that he would make no appointments as Commissioners which would not be acceptable to me personally. This may sound unusual, but it actually occurred. I did think, therefore, in making arbitrary appointments of some of the Commissioners without consultation with either myself or the Alliance, the Premier had shown little consideration for this promise or for the persons who had so loyally, unselfishly and heroically spent themselves in endeavoring to bring about his election and that of his supporters.

Not one of the men on the Government side of the House can say he does not owe some part of his success to my efforts and those of Mr. Bentley. I have not, however, heard of any of them speaking in our defence. The clergymen of this province, whom we would naturally suppose would give us whole-hearted

support, seeing that we had no selfish interests to serve, have also, according to the Premier's statement, thrown in the weight of their influence against us. The Temperance Alliance itself, according to the Premier, is supporting the Premier and the Government, and opposing the course which Mr. Bentley and I have taken. If Mr. Bentley or I were in error in what we have done we would gladly acknowledge it. We have merely, however, supported the cause of temperance, desiring to be as strictly non-political as our action as we were before. Can any one say that at any of the meetings either of us attended, we ever brought up one question or made one statement except such as related to the only moral issue involved, namely, the maintenance and preservation of the sobriety of our people. Yet we are attacked and have been hounded by both political parties. One would think we were veritable outcasts. To illustrate: In the one matter of the statements we made regarding the doctors' certificates, there are at least fifty active members of the Alliance, including many clergymen, who heard both Mr. Bentley and myself make these statements before the election, yet only one man has so far come to our support by de-

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