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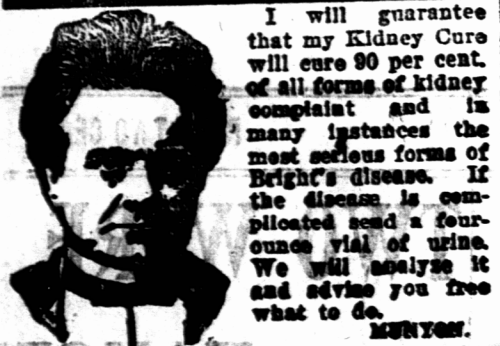
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G. H. SIMMONS. May 18, 3 m dly.

THE MORNING GUARDIAN.

MONDAY, MAY 29, 1899.

THE PREMIER'S DEFENCE.

We give up large space in other columns to Premier Farquharson's defence of his recent legislation in regard to the liquor traffic in Charlottetown. We do this willingly because his course has been very severely arraigned in these columns, and THE GUARDIAN is always desirous not to condemn any reputable public man unheard, provided always that he makes his defence in courteous terms as Mr. Farquharson has done. And, be it observed, the controversy between THE GUARDIAN and the Provincial Government is not one of a personal nature. The relations of this journal with Hon. Mr. Farquharson and his colleagues have always been of a personally friendly character. Our controversy is one of principle.

Mr. Farquharson at the outset of his letter speaks of the "almost personal and bitter attacks of THE GUARDIAN" which have fallen upon himself. It is true that we have singled him out as the chief offender, and for the very apparent reason that he has deserted, if not betrayed a great principle of which but a few months ago he was an ardent champion, and a leader in the temperance ranks. Such was THE GUARDIAN's charge. Mr. Farquharson does not, cannot deny the charge. He even admits it!

He tells us that a year ago the then premier introduced "a bill which provided for taxing the rum-seller," and he—"opposed that measure on principle." In other words he opposed it because it was wrong in principle. Principles do not change. They are based upon the eternal verities. If it was wrong last year to enrich the coffers of the province with license moneys sold by the rum-sellers as "a great sum" by which they obtained this "freedom" to prey upon their fellowmen in respectable guise, it is wrong this year also.

But as if the wrong of the transaction were not a sufficient reason for his opposition, Mr. Farquharson tells us he had other reasons as well. "The plebiscite was then announced and we hoped to carry prohibition." Well, the plebiscite has been held, and it showed that more than three-fourths of the people of this Island demanded prohibition. Does the fact afford any reason for a sudden relapse to the very opposite of prohibition—a license law? And even now a measure prepared by Mr. Farquharson's former co-workers in the temperance cause—a measure designed to give us prohibition by provinces under federal authority—is knocking at the doors of parliament. This was the time selected by Mr. Farquharson for his surrender of the principle of which last year he was the stalwart exponent, and these were the conditions. Has he not, in his own letter confessed to his treachery and betrayal?

The confession to which we have adverted, is the central feature of the Premier's letter. It is the best possible justification of all that THE GUARDIAN has written in regard to this most reprehensible transaction. The balance of his letter is merely made up of sophistries and fallacies. He would have us believe that it is his very zeal for temperance, his great heart wrung with the miseries with which "free rum" has deluged Charlottetown, that has moved him to adopt the license system! He would put a collar on the mad dog and make his owner pay a tax. In a word he adopts the very measure most cunningly devised and most eagerly coveted by the men in the liquor trade. He makes a bargain with the fox in order the better to protect the

helpless and imperilled birds upon the roost.

Of course Mr. Farquharson blames the temperance men. He says they brought in free rum. They did not respond to his alleged offer to bring in provincial prohibition. They did not correspond with the Minister of Justice to ascertain the extent of provincial powers. Their proposed bill allowed sellers the privilege to sell on with some new restrictions. They last year proposed that the saloon keeper "should pay into the funds of the city \$200 before he began to sell, which amount would be forfeited and become city funds if he broke the law." Everyone of these statements is a sophistry, a fallacy or a gross perversion of fact.

It was not the temperance men who brought in free rum! Mr. Farquharson had before him in the columns of THE GUARDIAN Mr. Mill's distinct statement of our provincial powers to legislate in regard to the liquor traffic. The amendments proposed to the Regulation Act did not propose a settlement and agreement with the liquor trade on the basis of money paid in. And it is a monstrous perversion of the truth to say that the temperance people in their bill of last year proposed that the saloon keeper should "pay" \$200. If with his memorable and not always pleasant experiences as a bank director Mr. Farquharson has not yet learned the difference between a "deposit" and a "payment" his retirement from the directorate was hardly premature!

And this deposit which Mr. Farquharson calls a "payment"—he did not think or talk that way last year—he now says is "rum money," the same as "license tax" is "rum money!" How strangely the rum money has blinded his eyes! A deposit to be forfeited on violation of the law, was rum money only in the sense of penalty. It was rum money in the sense that \$50 fine paid by one of Mr. Farquharson's rum-selling Justices of the Peace for violating the Scott Act is rum money. Mr. Farquharson's \$200 rum money is the price of exclusive privileges and legal respectability purchased by those who pay. It is the price of the sale of a great principle in order that the treasury may be enriched and that "both ends may be made to meet."

To make both ends meet was the key-note of Mr. Farquharson's budget speech. It is to be attained, it seems, by the "Temperance Premier" meeting the liquor men on their own ground, giving them what they most earnestly desire and have eagerly sought for, and turning his back upon his old associates and the professed principles of years past. For this we have no better excuse than that "circumstances alter cases and all sensible men are guided by circumstances." This has been the feeble excuse of wrong-doers in all ages, the backboneless creatures of circumstance.

The license bill, Mr. Farquharson tells us was adopted "as a compromise and in order to carry the amended Regulation Act." And herein lies the proof that the license act was a sop to the liquor men and not the temperance measure he claims it to be! The liquor interests and their supporters in the House demanded the license bill and Mr. Farquharson gave it to them. He says he did this in order to carry the amendments to the Regulation Act, but he knows very well that those amendments were cut to pieces and mangled past recognition by his party in the House. The temperance people have nothing to be thankful for on that score. We will not say there is no good in the amendments, but when laid alongside of the bill as prepared by the temperance people they are but a caricature and an insult.

But, says Mr. Farquharson: "We are charged with introducing a license system. The temperance people did this when they conferred the right—free license—to sell upon compliance with certain restrictions." The temperance people! They repealed the Scott Act and conferred a free license. The audacity of the falsehood is only equalled by its clumsiness. The temperance men are they that trouble Israel! This sentiment of Mr. Farquharson's will find an echo in every gilded saloon and low rum den in the land. Equally will his sneer about "the childish efforts of the so-called temperance men who surround THE GUARDIAN sanctum." We leave it to the sober, intelligent people of Prince Edward



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\$2.40

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Island to say whether the temperance people have brought in free license, or whether THE GUARDIAN has been true to its principles.

In the end Mr. Farquharson appeals to the Christian people of this fair province. He tells us, "Thank God they are not built on the narrow-gauge principle." We endorse his devout thanks, we hope with a firmer trust in the verdict of the Christian people than he. The "narrow-gauge" is the build of the time-serving politician who wants to take sharper curves and a more tortuous route than are possible to a broad gauge road. We submit that Premier Farquharson's recent public course and his own letter afford the surest indications of where a narrow-gauge, time-serving, principle-sinking politician is to be found.

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