

THE GUARDIAN PUBLIC FORUM

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion of questions of interest. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any article. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

THE ISSUES CLEAR

Sir—In your issue of Feb. 23, "Observer" endorses W. K. Rogers' suggestion for a conference between the Temperance Federation and an equal number of those who are "asking for change, and that this should result in a sane conclusion about our liquor legislation. My answer is that, until the opponents of Prohibition have something better to offer than Government Control, such a conference would give no hope of results. To include all interested parties such a conference would have to be attended by several representatives of the Montreal and Toronto brewers and distillers, who are interested to the extent of approximately a million dollars a year business, and that would not be acceptable to the Temperance Federation.

The issues by now are quite clear. The supporters of Prohibition want the present law enforced, and improved where necessary. Their opponents want more liquor. The two demands cannot be reconciled. The majority of the people of this province want to be free of the liquor traffic. Even those who themselves cannot resist the temptation to drink are opposed to the Government putting increased temptations in the way of their children and their grandchildren, and so why should they not vote for Prohibition?

"Observer" states that most of the liquor now consumed in the province is poor stuff, and that if a "change" is made, it will result in the consumption of "good liquor." Instead, it is true that under Government Sale the bootlegging is mostly done with Government liquor. Here, for instance, is the story, a true story, by the way, of a man a few years ago who moved from Nova Scotia to New Brunswick when N. S. had Prohibition. He was a member of the Temperance League, and he was that he was much easier to bootleg in N. B., easier to get supplies and easier to avoid being caught. The experience of Government Sale in the rest of the provinces is in very many cases the Government's wholesale house.

So even the bootlegger can sell "good liquor." But what is the result? During the years 1922 to 1925 the death rate from alcoholism in Canada rose from 12% to 32%. And that does not take into account deaths due indirectly to alcohol, such as cirrhosis of the liver or in fatal accidents. Those who believe that "good liquor" is the answer should read chapter XX in "Physiology and Hygiene," as taught in grades IX and X of our schools, since without a knowledge of that chapter they are quite unqualified to give advice concerning the alcoholic liquor. According to the teaching in that chapter, all drinks containing alcohol universally do harm. If this is not true, why is it permitted to be taught in our public schools?

If Government Sale is forced upon us it will be against the will of the majority of the people of this province. And no government can prosper when it goes against the expressed wish of the majority. The people of P. E. I. are in a quandary. There is no doubt about it. And why should our representatives for one moment consider opening the liquor faucet wider? Are we going to be ruled by the liquor interests of Ontario and Quebec and by a minority of our own people?

REPLY TO MR. BENTLEY

Sir—There was a letter in Wednesday's "Guardian" from Mr. W. E. Bentley which I hoped some one with more ability than I have would reply to. I feel that this letter would convey to its readers the impression that the members of the present local government are committed to maintaining the Prohibition Act. They are not so committed. If Mr. Bentley, or any person sufficiently interested, would read the official platform of the two parties put before the people at the last Provincial election they will find that no reference of any kind is made to the Prohibition law or any other liquor legislation.

CONTROL OF CONSUMPTION

Sir—Another of your correspondents, "W. E. Bentley" writes about the drinking of liquor. This statement is not true. (W. E. Bentley has already been silenced on this point.) Perhaps "Bert Wainner" conceived notions of so many things outside the proper functioning of his remaining powers. I shall again remind him that the moderationist does not advise anyone to drink liquor. On the contrary, he advises self-imposed total abstinence as the highest virtue to be attained. If, however, anyone wishes to enjoy a social glass of liquor, the moderationist does not object, but makes it a point to exhort him to follow the practice of temperance (condemns excessive drinking).

CHANCE FOR GIRL GUIDES

Sir—We are two New Zealand girls wishing to correspond with pen-friends on your Island. Could you please oblige us by conveying our wish to your readers. Our ages are sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) respectively; we are fond of all sport, reading and dancing. Please enclose snap with first letter, if possible. W. A. R. Sir, etc. PAMELA BERRY (16) 31 Gordon St., Dargaville, New Zealand. MAVIS CHESTER, (17), Dargaville, North Auckland, New Zealand.

THE TEMPERANCE VOTE

Sir—We noticed in your paper the other day two advertisements, one signed by the Premier of our Province, the other by Mr. Horace Wright, Liberal candidate in the coming 4th District election. The words of both letters made it appear that Mr. Wright and his friends had composed a pressing ultimatum for the Premier. If Mr. Wright and his friends really had an audience with their leader, did Mr. Wright tender his ultimatum on the liquor question? "A stallion deal" with a brewery firm in Montreal is rumored, and rumors of rum flowing like honey are going about. It is even announced in Mr. Wright's hearing from the pulpit. To all this there comes forth no denial, and Mr. Wright, running an election and posing as an apostle of temperance, would be one of the first to deny these rumors if it could be done. During all these weeks Mr. Wright had access to public halls, and the press, but Mr. Wright has remained reticent and silent. Now, in his letter of the 24th, he announces that if elected on the 29th, he will support the policies of his party, as formulated by the late Premier.

What were these policies on the liquor question? The present government came into office on August 18th. Almost immediately a special session of the House was called by the late Premier. The new government was formed and one of the first acts of this new government and its policies, which Mr. Wright promises to support, was to shamefully betray all of the temperance people of this province by throwing to the dogs the Independent Liquor Commission, which they promised the people. The Attorney-General, now Premier, was made Liquor Commissioner instead. And automatically prohibition practically ceased to be a living thing, and government sales became the order of the day, with rumors of brewery stallions and rum shops all over the country. The most shameful betrayal of the people's wishes ever known by any government in this country.

Mr. Wright now asks the temperance people of the Fourth District for their support. Contrast all this with Mr. Bentley, whose series of letters in your paper of late has done more for prohibition and temperance than all the politicians put together, whose chief ambition seems to be a seat amongst the mighties. There are two types of temperance man, the type like Mr. Bentley, who parade with temperance for temperance sake, and those who parade with temperance as a means to an end. No truly temperance man will subscribe himself to support any measure after they have betrayed the people as the present party in power has done, but will come out from among them and openly declare, "I am through with the cowards forever! Wake up, temperance people and don't be fooled any longer. I am, Sir, etc. DISGUSTED LIBERAL.

A FALSE ASSURANCE

Sir—In your issue of the 24th there appears a letter from Mr. Horace Wright in the course of which he thanks his Conservative friends for their demonstration of confidence in him by refraining from nominating a man in opposition to him in the coming election. Perhaps Mr. Wright would tell us what authorized persons in the Conservative party conveyed the news to him that it was out of the question to name a man in opposition to him in the coming election. If Mr. Wright really suffers from the type of mind which leads him to think these things, he has only to wait until the next provincial election to wake up and see for himself that he has been the victim of a false apparition.

AMUSED

Sir—The writer never saw a man who can say as many wrong things at the wrong time as can Mr. Wright. We suggest as one reason why the Conservatives refrained from opposing Mr. Wright. It may have been their hesitance in sending one man down to the local House in Charlottetown and perhaps another man down from one of those brewery stallions from Montreal. I am, Sir, etc. AMUSED.

APPRECIATION OF LIBRARY

Sir—I should like to express my appreciation of the service rendered the people of our Island in the demonstration of the Carnegie Library. Carlyle once said: "The true university of these days is a collection of books." The majority of books found on the library shelves of the different branches contain a great store of information and wisdom. Over the radio and through the press we learn a great deal these days about adult education. Someone speaking on the subject recently, said: "What better opportunity is afforded adults to continue their studies than through the medium of the libraries?" I think that is true. The shelves contain books on all subjects for every taste and we are never too old to learn. In some communities study groups have been formed and helpful discussions held about books on world problems, etc. In a recent article, we have been shown what the demonstration library has meant to one Island lady who has gathered much helpful information on gardening. I think particularly of the young people who possess the universal spirit of adventure. Some groups of young people's societies have ventured into the field of missions and have been helped by such books as "God's Candle Light" by Mabel Shaw, "Through the African Bush" by F. C. Gardner, etc. Other groups venturing into the subject of war and peace have found guidance through "Cry Havoc," by Beverley

NICHOLS, "PEACE WITH HONOUR"

by A. A. Mills. "Preface to Peace" by Norman Angell. A number of teachers have taken advantage of the opportunity of getting books for the school. Through the pages of "Lands and Peoples" which are very beautifully illustrated, the pupils have ventured into foreign countries and learned the customs of other races. There are other instances in which benefit has been derived from the books, but without taking any further space, I should like to express my appreciation again for the advantages offered us through the demonstration library. I am, Sir, etc. M. E. N.

AVOIDING ISSUES

Sir—Why is it that the two candidates for the Fourth District contest are not holding joint meetings? Why is it that Mr. Douglas Bell is asked why the Independent Liquor Commission was done away with, or about the stallions, or are both men afraid to meet for fear some old political ghost might pop up out of a rum keg? Why was the election in the Traverse poll a few elections ago. I am, Sir, etc. CURIOUS.

ELECTRIC LIGHT PROBLEM

Sir—The majority of citizens are much concerned over the financial condition of our City with its unbalanced budgets and mounting debt year after year. Council after Council have given the subject much thought, but none so far in recent years have provided a remedy. The same sorrowful tale is told at the end of each year until now, if all services are to be maintained as at present, it means that our revenue must be supplemented by from sixty to seventy thousand dollars. One thing is certain, we cannot go on in the same old way. The whole voice of the country calls for a policy of paying as you go. How can this be accomplished in civic affairs? Some will say by the raising of the tax rate, but properly owners shudder from such a prospect. Why not first take the necessary steps to procure the light and power from our great public utility—Municipal ownership?

Fifty years ago the City decided to add the sewerage system. Both these services cost a large sum of money but the expenditures have been justified and the citizens have so far not been called upon to pay a cent of the capital cost. Of course, debentures were issued but the returns from the system are sufficient to pay all interest charges and in addition provide yearly from four to six thousand dollars to the sinking fund. Is that not a satisfactory condition? The water and sewerage system is no more of a public utility than is light and power and being a public utility the public is entitled to all benefit arising therefrom. In every part of the civilized world public ownership of municipal ownership is becoming an accomplished fact. Ask the question of a correspondent asked the question if I know what I am talking about and my answer is "Yes." I do know that municipal ownership has proved a success in almost every place where it has been put in operation. Municipal ownership has produced two results: 1—It has given reduced rates to the public; 2—It has augmented the municipal revenue.

Do these objectives appeal to the people and am confident they do and we ask our leaders both civic and provincial to give the proper lead in securing such benefits. Let us look again at the results of our local electric plant. A total revenue of over \$200,000 and this to be augmented by increased consumption. An operating cost of \$140,000 which can be reduced by getting clear of absentee ownership and a yearly profit of \$60,000. These figures are not given in any annual report or with a view to any consistory proceedings but the fact is that our electric plant has become a complex organization which through a course of years has been a source of many financial transactions, which our people should not in the remotest sense sanction and which should be resented by appropriate action. The local plant was owned and operated by local people twenty years ago. It was desired with eagerness by financial interests abroad and at every step in the progress to the present ownership it has been the means of an inflated capitalization. Surely we now to make good this frenzied speculation. I must repeat some things in order to have them impressed upon the public mind. The plant was purchased for \$90,000. At present the owners claim its value as "nearly \$1,000,000." The Maritime Electric was incorporated June 27, 1917. It at once took over, purchased outright and merged the old Charlottetown Light and Power Company, whose stock had been first sold to the Charlottetown Electric Company which was a hold company operated here for ten years without receiving any authority from our Legislature to do so, but eventually not satisfied with ownership of the plant, the Company also desired to relieve our citizens of some of their money and so the Legislature is approached and in 1927 a Provincial Act was passed setting forth that the Charlottetown Light and Power Company was "ratified and confirmed" in the Maritime Electric Co. The balance of the story need not be recounted in detail except to say that after receiving this legislative sanction, certificates and obligations took place until notice of refusal to renew the license or permit was given in 1932. What the legal status of our present electric owners is may well be left for future decision, but the opinion has been expressed that it

IS INVOLVED IN CONSIDERABLE DOUBT

The days of The Associated system appear to be limited. At the present time that Company is involved in many lawsuits, one for a million dollars started last November in the Supreme Court in New York for mismanagement of funds and another for about forty million dollars started by the U. S. government for unpaid income taxes, and then there is the Rayburn-Wheeler Bill proposing the sentence of death to all utility holding companies. Let our civic rulers be alert to the situation as it exists and concentrate on the objective of local ownership of this great and growing public utility by which there can reasonably be expected a decrease in rates of from 10 to 15 percent and an increased civic revenue of at least \$30,000 yearly. Such an increase with reasonable civic economy and an increase in taxation of one percent should bring a balanced civic budget and restore hope and confidence to the city and the name and fame of our Mayor and Councilmen would be ever remembered in gratitude by a grateful posterity. I am, Sir, etc. JOHN F. WHEAR.

THREAT RESENTED

Sir—The great Thane of Miminigash has spoken and said that the Liberals who vote for Mr. Douglas Bell are simply reading themselves out of the Liberal party. Ain't I glad that I can read, although I never attended Oxford? Now, old-time Liberals, don't you be casting votes for the getting bumptious, just as the Thane of Cawdor was, and he yet a Liberal in short dresses? There are just as good Liberals in the fourth district of Prince as is the great Thane of Miminigash, and they have been casting votes for the Liberal party long before the Thane was able to blow his own nose. And these men are free independent men, who do not owe their present position to the death and manufacture of others. The Thane has got so swell-headed. It is said he has to use a shoe-spoon to put on his hat. He fails to realize that this is a free country, and that Mr. Douglas Bell has just as good a right to run as I have. Mr. Horace Wright would have to run as a Patron of Industry, a Progressive, a Communist, or a Government Control candidate. No, Thane, you are not the only one of money here nor are you the biggest pickle in the Liberal chow-chow, although you may imagine you are the centre of the universe. You will likely receive a job when the legal Premier of the Province arrives home from the Sunny South.

DARWIN'S THEORY

Sir—Darwin's theory, so very many Liberals in the district aver, has been revolutionized and they bechold in the present Premier of P. E. I. the survival of the unfittest. I am, Sir, etc. BLACK HORSE.

THE BY-ELECTION

Sir—The people of the northern half of this electoral district, irrespective of politics, seem pleased that Mr. Douglas Bell of Cape Traverse has been nominated to contest this district in the coming election. The Liberals feel that they owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Bell for the valuable assistance and support he gave Mr. Baker. Mr. Bell was most insistent that one of the members representing the district should be from the northern half and it is no small degree due to his efforts that Mr. Baker received the nomination. Ex-Premier Lea lived in the southern half of the district and it is only reasonable and fair that the seat vacated by his death should be filled by a man from that section. So the Liberals of the North will rally to Mr. Bell's support. A nephew of Ex-Premier Bell, one of the most eminent premiers P. E. I. ever had, Mr. Douglas Bell should be a safe and sane representative of the province to the advantage of the labouring man in his House, a man unwilling to sneeze every time the Government takes a pinch of snuff, a man who will stand up for his convictions. All who cherish their independence will rally to Mr. Bell's support. Mr. Horace Wright's political grave is Doug. I am, Sir, etc. I. C. RIGHT

NO AXES TO GRIND

Sir—"Just what the country needs, an independent member in the Legislature"—this was the expression on nearly everyone's lips in this town Saturday afternoon and evening when it became known that Mr. Douglas Bell had been nominated as an independent candidate. "Fearless, independent and dependable" is how those who know Doug Bell would describe him. Come up and see us some time, Doug. We are all waiting to give you the glad hand. We have no axes to grind, and the only X we will give you is one after your name on the ballots election day. I am, Sir, etc. VOTER

DEPLETE NORTHERN TIMBER FOR TIRES

ST. WALBURG, Sask. (C.P.)—Cutting of great tamarac timber for railway ties is rapidly depleting reserves of northern Saskatchewan. Farmers are hauling out ties in large numbers, and steps may be taken by the government to regulate the winter industry. Kensington, Feb. 27, 1936.

NEWS ITEMS OF 100 YEARS AGO

Old Copy of P. E. I. "Royal Gazette" Contains Much News Of Interest. Politics and temperance evidently were questions of as much concern to Prince Edward Islanders a hundred years ago as they are today. This at any rate, is the impression one receives from reading the "Royal Gazette" of March 1, 1836, a copy of which, in excellent preservation, is in the possession of Mr. Lawson Crosby, of West Royalty.

The issue is of particular interest in that the legislative expenditures for the year 1835 are published in detail. They total 7,495 pounds, 7 shillings, 10 pence, including an expenditure of 100 pounds "for expenses incurred in the election of a Member of the House of Commons for the use of His Majesty's Council, House of Assembly, and the Military. Other items include the sum of 74 pounds, 5 shillings for "bridge at Government House," and 33 pounds, 6 shillings, 9 pence for "expenses incurred in the election of a Member of the House of Commons for the use of His Majesty's Council, House of Assembly, and the Military. Other items include the sum of 74 pounds, 5 shillings for "bridge at Government House," and 33 pounds, 6 shillings, 9 pence for "expenses incurred in the election of a Member of the House of Commons for the use of His Majesty's Council, House of Assembly, and the Military. 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