

Sixty Years Conflict With Liquor Evil In P. E. Island

A Series of Papers Reviewing Drinking Conditions and Temperance Efforts and Enactments Up To Our Present Day of Prohibition Enforcement

(BY AN OBSERVER) POLITICAL SCEPTICS

There was a time in the English economy when the ghouls of the graveyard sought to live by robbing the bodies of the dead. They were in a class by themselves—the thieves and bandits, seeking a livelihood by plugging the living, being considered as in a respectable class compared with them. Modern so-called political critics who search for something to satisfy a morbid craving for some scandal among the efforts of reformers are the prototypes of these old-time ghouls.

The dyed in the wool politicians are conspicuous in this category. They flourish amongst us, at times upon the public platform, and too often behind the editor's chair in an otherwise sympathetic press. There is no immunity due to any government or political party for failure or neglect to live up to their responsibilities, and, when they do, they are in the hands of the press and the people, to criticize, reprimand and condemn. Nor is there excuse or toleration for either press or other public defamer in wantonly attacking those who fearlessly and faithfully do their duty.

Making temperance as against free rum, or against license or government control, or any other form of administration, a public issue, is well within the area of political discussion. Neglect or failure to regulate temperance by those in public positions, is also a subject for debate. But to make a political football of temperance, or any moral or Christian effort, is the work, not of an ordinary critic, whose operations are to promote truth, but rather of the viciously-inclined, who would root out purity to replace it with impurity. It is in this latter work that the real political critic becomes a public nuisance, in his purblind obsession that his outpourings are pleasant reading to his party.

Apart from politics the Patriot has invariably stood out splendidly on the side of temperance in all things. We have already quoted its testimony to the sobriety of our people, and an indirect commendation of our prohibition enforcement. But why depart from this course of honor, when the supposed interest of the precious political party can apparently be better served by gross misrepresentation? Why not play the temperance game, in season and out of the season, and, if the enemy does well, give them their meed of credit? Or, if party demands are so urgent that the lips are sealed against the square game, then leave them sealed on the whole subject rather than play the hypocrite in pretending to discover faults when they actually do not exist.

Why this propaganda for purely partisan effect? It does no good to the cause of temperance. Even those whom it is supposed to benefit, can see through the flimsy pretence, and when it does not amuse, reduce the writers to contempt. Of necessity many pages of the records of the Prohibition Commission must be sealed from the public gaze. To display these to every curiosity seeker, or political scandal seeker, would be to destroy the efficiency of the service, and render the Act abortive in its designed purpose. Because the Commission refused to imperil their work of enforcement by giving needless and private details out for publication, they are made the butt for wholesale and repeated attacks from the Liberal party organ.

Because they declined to parade the inside business with regard to instance, to seized liquors, they were denounced and placed under the false implication of selling as medicines that which was unfit for the purpose. In this political expedition they thought to create an atmosphere which would react on the government. In this craving

MRS. J. B. HILTZ



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for underhand work, when told that "bootleg" liquors were destroyed, they did not hesitate to twist "bootleg" into "seized" liquors, an entirely different thing, in the vain hope of undermining the Commission in the public confidence.

On March 26, 1925, the Patriot declared: "The increase of drunkenness in our streets, and the record of the Police Court bear abundant testimony to the lax enforcement of the Prohibition Act under the Stewart Government." The absurdity of this piece of propaganda is in the officially certified fact, that the Police Court record shows the direct opposite, an enormously increased efficiency of enforcement over that of the red letter failures under the Bell regime. There would be much greater wisdom if, in its searches, the partisan organ would scrutinize actual recorded facts for material, instead of its disorderly imagination.

In its saner and more rational moments, on Tuesday January 4th, last, when the holiday cheer seems to have put it into the mood to be like fair and truthful, the Patriot, in an apparently repentant state of mind, gave a glowing tribute to our people's sobriety, and to the excellence of our prohibition conditions responsible for this. Why not carry this consistency and truth into its political controversy, instead of stirring its lurid imagination for some foreign matter to be used to leaven and offend all sense of decency?

Only of recent date we have another instance of this partisan falling. The city vendor's store is open for one hour on Sundays to accommodate urgent medical demands. A prescription was presented calling for rum. The holder demanded "Demarrara". There was rum of other places, but none of that on hand. Being needed to treat the effects of a cold, the customer accepted whiskey as a substitute. There would have been no serious fault if the vendor had sent him home with the following day. He did not, but to meet an emergency, he exceeded his duty in giving this whiskey as a substitute. It was an act of sympathy and kindness which any man of feeling would have done. It was not authorized by the Prohibition Act, the Government or the Prohibition Commission. It probably never occurred before, and now it is most unlikely ever to occur again. Yet even that small and unimportant item is made into a rich morsel for the critic of the evening political organ.

On October 28th, another of those gems sparkling like a great diamond shining from its matrix. "Finally the question was asked, (Mr. Paton)—'Can you give me the name of the Montreal party who tests the liquor for the Commission.' Of course this was refused. This did not satisfy the man with the rake, and Mr. Leod the accountant was appealed to, with no better success. This surely outshines the dead branches of political farces. Luckily we have business men in control of our Prohibition Act. Men who refuse to commit the suicidal act of advertising their private business to the world, and especially for the benefit of the powerful and wealthy brewery interests of the upper provinces.

These are but a few instances of political partisanship so much to be deplored. If on any of them, or in the many other cases that might be cited, there was the question of a real principle at stake, some actual wrong to be righted or some serious neglect to be corrected, none would have grounds for complaint, even though it were in the nature of party propaganda. But this grovelling down to earth, sending out of sight to obtain strange drinks at unseasonable hours, this multiplication of questions which no sensible business man would answer—all in a devoted search after political ammunition to fire at offending political opponents—easily places the so-called critic upon a level of contempt below that of the ghouls so noted in the grave yards of St. Paul's.

Some time ago a federal government employee was convicted for a defalcation of some thousands of dollars. It was not used to defame Premier King or his government in an implication of dishonesty. Why not? It was really a serious offence, a bad violation of our law, and the act of a government official. It was not proscribed into political propaganda, because first it was the act of a wayward employee, for which the government were not responsible, and second, because there are no critics amongst those opposed to Premier King with a nature small enough for such contemptible work. But why didn't the Patriot, with its fondness for under-the-belt warfare, make the thrust? There is only the one answer—because its opponents are not in power. It is because a conscientious employee of the Commission makes a slight error, by which no one suffers, in which no wrong has been done, except to vary from the letter of the Act, to enforce its spirit, the flood gates of its party in-

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flamed fury, are open upon the Stewart government for something they knew nothing of, nor had any party therein. What a spectacle in political criticism! Even in a frame-up for party purposes we would expect some little display of horse-sense. What is there in the stupidly of butting up a soft head against a hard stone wall? Word paintings, even in an editorial column, cannot transform white into black. Figures of fact refuse to be changed into fiction by any application of newspaper hot air. Five convictions under those halcyon days of Bell domination when pitted against forty-six in the present day will not in any way add explosive force to those vindictive attacks. The Stewart government, after appointing an efficient Commission, and backing them with every facility to act, have only performed their proper part. It is up to the Commission to do the rest. And yet, even if they are to be judged by the successes or failures of that Commission, their cause and lot is a happy one. The judgment of common sense and popular approval is surely worth them for never in the history of temperance in this province has there been a grander achievement.

WASH THE LINE.

Wrap the soiled clothes around the washboard and scrub with soap suds and a scrubbing brush. Pass under the spigot to rinse well and dry in the sunshine. If the line is always clean there is no worry about smudges on the clothes where they have been hung to it.

Tomorrow's Radio Program

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21

International Radio Programs EVENING CONCERTS

- 6.15 P. M. KDKA (309) E. Pitts. KDKA String Ensemble. 7.00 P. M. WIP (509) Phila. Maplewood Boys' School. 7.30 P. M. WABC (316) N. Y. Atlantic Ensemble. WBC (333) Springfield. Concert. WCAU (278) Phila. Shellenberg Instrumental Trio. WFAF (492) N. Y. The Four Waltz Kings. WEEI (319) Boston. Program. 7.35 P. M. WGY (389) Schenectady. Musicales. 8.00 P. M. WBAL (246) Baltimore. Musical Program. WAAM (263) Newark. Studio Program. WJRI (517) Detroit. Arctic Flavors. KDKA (309) E. Pitts. Concert. WFAF (492) N. Y. Happiness Boys WTC (476) Hartford. Colonial Male Quartette. WEEI (319) Boston. Program. 8.30 P. M. WFAF (492) N. Y. Half Hours with Famous Composers. WBC (333) Springfield. Musicales. WTAG (545) Worcester. To be announced. 9.00 P. M. WNYC (526) N. Y. Music. WTAG (545) Worcester. Band Concert. WSB (428) Atlanta. Community Program. WBG (500) Atlantic City. Concert. WBC (333) Springfield. Concert. WCAU (278) Phila. Musicales. WEEI (319) Boston. Neapolitan Girls Quintette. WHK (273) Cleveland. Studio Program. CNRT (357) Toronto. Philharmonic Quartette. WEEI (319) Boston. Neapolitan

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- Girls. 9.15 P. M. WJZ (455) N. Y. Violinist. 10.15 P. M. WABC (316) N. Y. Studio. 10.30 P. M. WTAM (390) Cleveland. Studio Orchestra. WTAG (545) Worcester. Belco Entertainers. WGY (389) Schenectady. Musicales. 10.00 P. M. WFAF (492) N. Y. Whittall-Anglo Persians, to WIC, WEAR, WTAM, KSD, WWJ, WCO, WDAF, WGR, WEEI, WTAG, WCAE, WOC and WLIT. WJIK (p73) Cleveland. Instrumental. WTC (476) Hartford. Radio Farm Course--Conn. Agriculture College. 7.30 P. M. WGY (389) Schenectady. Health Talk. 8.00 P. M. WOR (495) Newark. N. Y. University. 8.30 P. M. WRNY (259) New York. Chemistry. WANT TO DANCE? 7.00 P. M. WRC (469) Washington. Hamiltons 8.30 P. M. WPG (300) Atlantic City. Pier. 9.30 P. M. WFAF (492) N. Y. La France. 10.00 P. M. WPG (300) Atlantic City. Garden Pier. 11.00 P. M. WJAR (306) Providence. Biltmore. WBAL (216) Baltimore. Dance. WJ? (455) New York. Twin Oaks. 11.30 P. M. WFAF (492) New York. Greenwich Village. 12.00 Mid. WGR (319) Buffalo. Stater. (Copyright, 1927, by International Radio Programs, Chicago.)

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