

# THE GUARANTIAN PUBLIC FORUM

## PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions of correspondents.

### ELECTRIC LIGHT PROBLEM

Sir,—The Mayor and Council are to be commended for the prompt action taken when it became known that a stranger was in our midst seeking the fruits of others' toil and that the method of entrance was not through the door but by "climbing in some other way." The door in this instance would be by the consent and with the co-operation of the City Council representing the city and the government representing all others interested.

Charlottetown has had quite sufficient of group ownership. Now that there is a break in the horizon and an opportunity is in sight perhaps dimly, of having our electric plant localized, with local control and management, the Council is justified in the action taken to prevent, if possible, being tied up with another international group taking tribute from the people here to keep some weaker members of the group in operation.

The whole trend of the legislation and action of the Roosevelt administration has been directed at holding company organizations, so far as they affect public utilities and it is up to our legislators to profit by experiences elsewhere.

The Investors Protective Committee have always acted in harmony with the City Council and will continue to do so. The committee are prepared to take over the present plant, if same can be secured at such a price that some consideration may be given the local bond holders and that a fair and just contract be made with the city. It is realized, however, that the city has a prior right either to purchase outright the present plant and equipment or to put in a competitive plant.

It is regrettable, if the Council would be forced to this latter course and it is not anticipated that same may be necessary. The Council may be depended upon to act with due caution whenever the report of the expert valuator, who is to be employed, is handed in. Future action will largely depend upon that report but the necessary legislative action must be secured at the approaching session. The public interest will no doubt be the controlling objective of that legislation.

It might be well to give some figures of the cost or valuation of distribution systems as shown in the last report of the Power Authority of the State of New York. The places selected do not exceed a population of 17,000.

Batavia, N. Y., valuation \$235,826.  
Corning, N. Y., valuation \$222,257.  
Hudson, N. Y., valuation \$120,556.  
Malone, N. Y., valuation \$119,925.  
Oneonta, N. Y., valuation \$207,994.  
Pleasantburg, N. Y., valuation \$165,470.

In every case it is said "property devoted to street lighting has been excluded." The items included in the valuation are poles and fixtures, line transformers, conductors, services, line transformers, consumers' meters and general property. The value of the generating plant would be extra.

The average cost for the six cities above named, all of which are on a par with Charlottetown, would be \$178,740 for the distribution system. The capital expenditure for the municipal street lighting system according to the report of the Pictou County Power Board, is \$46,949.47 and the capital expenditure for organization, land, structures, plants and installations total \$131,612.90. All these amounts added together give \$357,202.37 and it would appear that a new plant ready to operate could be constructed for that figure.

I am, Sir, etc.,  
JOHN F. WHEAR.

### "PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF"

Sir,—In your editorial notes this morning (Feb. 20th), you tell us that according to Mr. Bentley, the Executive Secretary of the Temperance Federation are apt to do more harm than good. Well, Mr. Bentley ought to know, for many have not forgotten the campaign conducted by Mr. Bentley and Rev. A. A. Ford in a few years ago, and the effect it had on the Temperance Alliance, but that is not my point at this time. A circular letter is being circulated throughout the province stating that a great majority of our legislators were in favour of government control, and the great head of the bootleggers to get busy and prevent them from doing so. I am acquainted with a good many of the men who will sit in the coming house, and I do not think they have any notion of making any change, but driven to it by the prohibition needing by the proper methods. Supposing the majority are in favour of government control, does it help any to spread it all over the country? As a rule the men who are sent to represent the people do what the people want and these men know that this Province does not want government control. Let us have some faith in our public men. But there is another thing that comes to me in this connection. The Temperance Federation is largely under the influence of the clergy. The Committee that presented that brief were largely made of such. Now, suppose that the Legislature will appoint a committee to wait on the ministers, and this Committee will present a brief to them, in which

they will say: "Gentlemen, we have been elected by the people to carry on the work of past legislatures, and there is at the present time an agitation both for and against Prohibition. We would like to do the best we can in the interests of good citizenship."

"Now it has been reported to us, that you have in your churches men who like a drink, sometimes two, and that you have many who are in favour of government control; in fact the report is that such men are on the official boards of your churches. Now, we know that all laws must have sentiment behind them, and what is the good of you gentlemen asking us to pass laws that the prominent people in your own churches are breaking every day. Could you not help us a little, and we can assure you that we shall now and always do our best to legislate for the good of our people."

I am not ashamed of my name, but for the present I will call myself

### AN OLD PROHIBITIONIST

Sir,—A little while back Mr. Rogers in a letter to the press said that wherever prohibition had been tried it had been thrown out as a failure. In that statement he presumes he meant to include the United States. In that, of course, as in a lot of other things, he is all wrong, for the United States did not repeal the 18th Amendment on any such basis. However, let him have his opinion, but it illustrates how he is to argue his side of the case.

But since he thinks he has stated a fact for the people in this province, let us note the "progress" (?) to date towards better conditions under "Repeal," as it is popularly known. The National Prohibition Party, in the 18th amendment came on December 5th last, and a good deal of stocking in various ways has been going on. Here are some of the results revealed.

One of the arguments advanced by "repealists," as they are called, is that the repeal of the 18th amendment would result in a revenue for the State of New York. In that, of course, as in a lot of other things, he is all wrong, for the United States did not repeal the 18th Amendment on any such basis. However, let him have his opinion, but it illustrates how he is to argue his side of the case.

Incidentally, of course, repeal was to be a true temperance measure. There would be no more of the Congressional and Christian churches reports that while in pre-prohibition days there were 177,000 cases of ill-health, there are now 438,000 and 207,000 of these sell all the evidence of liquor. There is all the evidence necessary to prove that increased facilities for drinking has not resulted in decreased drinking nor yet decreased drunkenness. At the beginning of the prohibition period, according to a national consumption survey, about 100 million gallons of liquor were consumed in the first year of repeal, there was a consumption of about 100,000,000. It looks therefore as if prohibition "weaned some bottle bingers" during its lifetime in the U.S.A.

Of course, the "repealists," without effort or concern of anyone, would end the wave of crime that had swept over the country, and was blamped upon prohibition by its enemies. What then, in 1935 the record? Just this. In 1935 the Bureau of Prisons reported that the population in federal prisons had increased from 12,200 in 1932 to 15,400 in 1935. The federal director of penitentiaries states that the number of prisoners under the Federal penitentiary system has increased from 12,200 in 1932 to 15,400 in 1935. The federal director of penitentiaries states that the number of prisoners under the Federal penitentiary system has increased from 12,200 in 1932 to 15,400 in 1935.

One of the sins for which prohibition was blamed was the high death rate due to alcoholism. That through the repeal of the 18th amendment the death rate of alcoholism was 2.5, and in the second year of "repeal" it was 2.9. In the first year of repeal the highway fatality total was up 13% to the mark of 36,400, and a Washington dispatch to The Monitor says drunken drivers have increased from 10 to 69 percent in 20 out of 23 states surveyed. Even the liquor trade itself express alarm at the rising total of drinking drivers that get into court.

The net results might be summed up thus: The saloon was to go—there are more of them now; the bootlegger was to disappear—he still flourishes; crime was to end—it goes on worse than ever; unemployment was to be reduced—it comes from around prosperity which still hides; drinking was to diminish—it is worse. Even Clarence Darrow is alarmed. The New York Herald Tribune (no dry day) writes: "The Temperance Federation is in favour of government control, does it help any to spread it all over the country? As a rule the men who are sent to represent the people do what the people want and these men know that this Province does not want government control. Let us have some faith in our public men. But there is another thing that comes to me in this connection. The Temperance Federation is largely under the influence of the clergy. The Committee that presented that brief were largely made of such. Now, suppose that the Legislature will appoint a committee to wait on the ministers, and this Committee will present a brief to them, in which

### PROHIBITION

Sir,—Recently an Irishman was accused of not taking part in the Great War. He was asked: "What's that you say, I didn't fight in the war? My good sir, it is my honor to be an Irishman and when the last war was declared, there was not to be found in the whole of Ireland a single conscientious objector. Those who were not on one side were on the other."

It must be the Irish in me, for in spite of advice to the contrary, I have definitely decided to jump into this fight over prohibition. It is a type of fight, however, that unlike the Great War, should produce some good. A sensible, intelligent discussion never killed anyone. Truth and right are bound to win where there are honest efforts made in their regard.

I shall begin by admitting that I am no Joe Louis when it comes to battling. My first offensive is going to be a few fly jabs or uppercuts (metaphorical ones of course) to Mr. W. E. Bentley.

He says among other things in his letter February 20, that "public decency demanded that some interference take place. Interference could ONLY take place by the enactment of law." As it stands that is wrong. Law is not the ONLY interference (?) for an abuse. Education or moral suasion is another, and in the fine analysis, it is best interference or remedy of all. If the money, time and energy expended on prohibition here and elsewhere had been used for the religious and moral training of our youth, what a fund of virtue and self-control would not the world possess today in the use not only of drink but also of words and of everything else. Progress and improvement of the nation as of the individual must come from within and not from without. Just as the best school is the one that teaches its pupils to do without it, so the best country is the one that makes laws unnecessary.

But not with some law is the only interference there are forever making or contemplating the making of laws. What they would not give to be in Ottawa or some other capital where they could make laws to their heart's content. Lacking that, they engage in lobbying and if after persistent, unrelenting efforts they succeed in passing their law through, they are dependable. It was felt their day has not been completely lost. Their theme-song is a variation of "It is the Law!" and "There ought to be a law against that!" Hence the making and breaking of laws, hence in the matter of Government, the growing disgust and apathy of all respectable citizens.

From "Law" it is very easy for the law-shippers to jump to this law or that law. Has Mr. Bentley never heard of bad laws or unjust laws? Has he never heard of untime laws or unwise laws? Mind you, I am not saying that Prohibition is an unjust or untime law. Nor am I insinuating that it should not be obeyed. I am saying that some (and I think our number is large enough not to be identified with brewery-men and rum-sellers) who spend judgment with regard to the morality of prohibition and who firmly agree with Messrs Bentley, Wainwright and others that it is a bad law, should not be obeyed. I am saying that some (and I think our number is large enough not to be identified with brewery-men and rum-sellers) who spend judgment with regard to the morality of prohibition and who firmly agree with Messrs Bentley, Wainwright and others that it is a bad law, should not be obeyed.

It is placed the matter in the hands of the medical profession. The medical profession as a class is an honourable one. No privacy or sanctity of life is withheld from them when occasion demands. What would the legislature do but leave in the hands of the medical profession the granting or withholding of certificates for liquor to be used for medicinal purposes? But the privilege has been abused. Statements have been made from time to time, seemingly all too true, not only that certificates are given by many doctors when there is no illness, but that books of certificates signed in blank have been kept "on tap," as it were, in the office of the Vendor, to be used when wanted. These were not always used in case of illness.

The illegal sale of liquor for beverage use under the guise of medicinal certificates has been generally admitted. It was claimed by responsible persons in 1927. It is claimed today. The claim appears to be true. It is generally believed. It is one of the chief reasons for the repeal of the 18th amendment. "One law for the rich, another for the poor," is the statement that is being made. If the statement be true, justice and common decency demand that the repeal be removed.

The present legislature is in an all-powerful position. Nothing can withstand its power. It can give and it can take away. The right which was given to the medical profession can be withdrawn. It can be limited. It can be controlled. The Medical Profession is a corporation. The corporation itself can be made responsible. It is a self-governing body. There are various ways by which the evil may be curbed.

A conference between members of the Government and representatives of the medical profession would readily find a solution. The medical profession wish to retain the privilege of prescribing alcohol for use as a medicine. They should be given to understand they must find a way to prevent its use as a beverage; under the guise of medicine. The aims and the accomplishments of the forty-two legislatures who have preceded the present Assembly should be sure to encourage the present legislature, in its unchallengeable position of power, to remove this stigma from the law and from the medical profession.

I am, Sir, etc.,  
W. E. BENTLEY.

### PROTECTING OUR HOMES.

Sir,—The full benefit would not have been obtained from examining the illuminative record of the experience of the legislatures of the Province in dealing with the drink problem were we unable from that record to derive helpful suggestions for the future.

We have seen that during the 183 years of the record, the forty-two legislatures that have come in being, have performed their part as representatives of the people, and whose acts and conduct have then passed into history, have been actuated by one desire and purpose, the improvement of the moral, social and physical condition of the people.

Whatever was the political party from which they were drawn, one golden thread can be discerned in the warp of their legislative weaving, a gleam of unselfish and altruistic motive is reflected throughout in their legislation. A few of the common purposes of legislation, of improvement, of bettering the lot of the people.

We have seen how the machinations of traffickers in intoxicants seemed at the time almost to foil and to frustrate the well-intentioned effort of the legislature. Many disappointments must from time to time have resulted.

It is fitting that we should at times take a long view of our history; that we should rise above mere party feeling and party squabbles and take a distant perspective of our history as a whole. Looked at from such viewpoint, a record becomes inspiring. It is a noble record.

We see on the one hand endless chicanery, circumvention, violation, anything to defeat the legislature's purpose and to sell more liquor. We see on the other hand an indomitable perseverance and industry, despite all opposition, to make conditions better for our homes, our wives and children, to protect if possible, the wage-earner from his own weakness. When one amendment failed the legislature tried another. Eventually it found inconsistency with the public interest and conditions of sobriety that alcohol be sold at all. Its sale was consequently prohibited. Exception was made in the case of medicine. If the wage-earner were ill, if any of his family were ill; and if alcohol as a medicine were needed, alcohol should be permitted. It was never intended to deprive any patient of needed medicine, even alcohol, dangerous as the use of alcohol had been found to be.

So the exception was made that while the use of liquor as a beverage was forbidden, its use as a medicine was permitted. This placed the matter in the hands of the medical profession. The medical profession as a class is an honourable one. No privacy or sanctity of life is withheld from them when occasion demands.

What would the legislature do but leave in the hands of the medical profession the granting or withholding of certificates for liquor to be used for medicinal purposes? But the privilege has been abused. Statements have been made from time to time, seemingly all too true, not only that certificates are given by many doctors when there is no illness, but that books of certificates signed in blank have been kept "on tap," as it were, in the office of the Vendor, to be used when wanted. These were not always used in case of illness.

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### THE MODERATE DRINKER

Sir,—A great human cry is, "what shall we have, prohibition or moderation?" It means to attain to a condition of happiness or to a condition in which everyone can make an honest living. I would say prohibition. In the case of Moderation we would be enriching the brewery at the expense of all who would drink. Who can define where moderation stops and im-moderation begins. It must be a very thin line. In fact there is no such thing as moderation in drinking alcoholic liquor. What man, if he drinks one glass, is going to stop at that? No, the first glass only clears the way for the second glass, and so on. This is human nature.

A certain writer stated that we should not be interfered with in partaking of the fruits of the earth. I wish to state that although ordinary wine may be regarded as the fruit of the earth, alcoholic liquors cannot be so regarded. It is the

product of man's invention, i. e. distillation. These liquors, so called "proof," contain as much as 50 per cent alcohol. Wine contains at most by natural fermentation, 15 per cent alcohol, but they are not called alcoholic. Beers contain a small percentage of alcohol but are not said to be alcoholic. If the moderate drinker stopped at beers and wines, there would be no need of prohibition. It is the moderate drinker that causes all the trouble. He is the bootlegger's best customer. The man who takes a glass or two is more dangerous to society than the man who gets drunk, for the latter will be taken charge of, while the former will jump into his car and drive to the common danger. After the provincial election a number of moderate drinkers were writing to the press with the object of repudiating the prohibition law, which almost everyone will admit is the best liquor law P. E. Island ever had, and had many for the last century. Some had in view that the incoming government would take with their gaily trot along through life making themselves rich at the expense of the "tipper" and the "so". The government will disappoint the moderate drinker, for prohibition will be enforced as well as ever in spite of exaggerated statements re infractions.

Why should moderation expect to see the selling of liquor, into respectable high class hotels? Was it ever respectable to sell or drink alcoholic liquors? If it is the fools, these are the places for it, if it should have any place. It is kept there for the moderate drinker that it is kept there.

I am, Sir, etc.,  
MALCOLM MACNEILL,  
St. Catharines

### OFFICIAL FIGURES AND DATA

Sir,—The editors of our Island papers, as others also have stated, are performing a real service these days, in allowing the public to thresh out the temperance situation through the press. Again, we thank you for the figures relative to liquor and crime were discounted, through a correspondent, by an authority in Ontario, as being exaggerated. Here are a few more convincing. They are undoubtedly "dry," but they are worth considering, and they are taken from official reports, they are dependable. It was between the years 1923 and 1930 that the Provinces of Canada were one after another changing from Prohibition to Government Sale.

The following seven crimes increased during those years as follows: Violation of liquor laws, 10,088 in 1923 to 18,132 in 1930; drunkenness, 19,265 to 35,789; vagrancy, 8,611 to 25,565; disorderly conduct, 8,611 to 25,565; neglecting of children, 1,351 to 2,890; felonious assaults, 1,582 to 3,017; crimes against property with violence, 1,321 to 3,696; attempted suicide 27 to 183. No one class of liquor is the chief factor in crime against the person who has made crime a study of the facts knows that an increased flow of liquor always means more crime.

Some people tell us that it is impossible to make people good by law. That is true. But it is a bad law that causes a universal increase in crime. Government sale does exactly that. We don't want it. And some tell us that Prohibition is the bootlegger. It is the bootlegger, like some, that is the chief factor in crime against the person who has made crime a study of the facts knows that an increased flow of liquor always means more crime.

Here is a statement by the British Columbia Liquor Board, "As much liquor is sold by bootleggers as is sold in the government by the Saskatchewan Liquor Board, 'Bootlegging increased 111% in the first year.'"

Here is a statement by the Alberta Liquor Board, "Our greatest problem is moonshine in the country do not want it. And the story is the same from one ocean to the other. Who was it said that Government Sale did away with the bootlegger? "Believe it or not," some people say, "the 'rum element' is a temperance measure." In Prohibition days the wet interests in Ontario claimed that there was \$30,000 worth of liquor sold annually in the province. "Government Control" immediately increased that to over \$50,000 from bootleggers, (see previous paragraph).

### CONTROL OF THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS

Sir,—In my two previous letters on liquor control I dealt with sound liquor legislation, history of drink, and history of British liquor legislation. With your kind permission, I shall state briefly the true attitude of the Moderationist towards liquor control, and name the remedies which can be applied to lessen the evils caused by excessive drinking.

In other words, I shall state certain methods which, I believe, will promote the cause of true temperance. First, let me point out that one of your correspondents, Mr. W. E. Bentley, in his harping on the "spirit of manliness" seems to take it for granted that moderationists try to encourage young men to drink in order to prove their manly qualities, and, secondly, that moderationists are allied with the liquor interests. Neither statement could be further from the truth. Furthermore, he seems unable to make a distinction between statutory legislation and the law of the land. He reads it into his harping on the "spirit of manliness" seems to take it for granted that moderationists try to encourage young men to drink in order to prove their manly qualities, and, secondly, that moderationists are allied with the liquor interests.

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of course, but their number is relatively small. Just as the disreputable saloon-keepers were succeeded by disreputable bootleggers, any new liquor law introduced would prevent the operation of some new law-breakers. The only true wisdom is to try to discover a law that will have the genuine support of public opinion, which can be enforced. But you can't expect all liquor dealers to keep the law. You may amend the law, but you will not amend the law-breakers. Enact any liquor law you like, even one so generally acceptable as the Quebec law, and you will find that the violation of the liquor business you will find law-breakers.

Of course, this fact does not justify prohibition. You cannot curb crime with absurdity. It would seem that many drys' argument is: "Since the liquor dealers won't obey a reasonable law, let us make them obey an unreasonable one." But this is poor logic. It is worse psychology. It is asinine statecraft. In this attitude, the lawbreaker is the lawbreaker. He is against prohibition. He criticizes the law, he wants the law repealed, and yet condemns the lawbreaker. Is this stand logical? No, it is not. It is a superficial thinker who says that this position is not rigidly logical. I do not need to justify it to intelligent people. The remedy for the evils of intemperance is, the one and only true plan for improvement, and moral suasion. This may seem a slow method. But it was Christ's method. "Preach to every creature," was His commission to the Apostles. Only when the individual is convinced can you be sure of his conversion. And the process of conversion is long and slow. Those who attempt labor-saving devices with the volatile spirit of man will fail. There are no "short cuts" in the moral world. But it seems that impatient, or will not, see that self-evident fact. As a consequence, such persons have always produced disaster in place of reform. Such would seem to be the outcome of the policy of the prohibition undertaken in the United States some years ago, and regarded as an excellent method of reviving a decadent christianity. But prohibition there is gone forever. The only way to succeed in making a country sober is to persuade its individual citizens, one by one, to be sober. "Reformers" are notoriously blind to evident truths. Prohibitionists do not see the enormous and unescapable fact that Prohibition is a failure. "None are so blind as those who will not see."

The real principle to be kept in mind in discussing the control of the consumption of liquor is "the abuse of a thing does not destroy its use." It is not a sin to use liquor. Hence the use of liquor is not opposed to the moral law. A statutory enactment to the contrary is not a just law and therefore is not obligatory morally. Christ comes before the state always. The violation of an opposition to such a law does not constitute a sin. The moral principle is being violated. What is a statute-to-day may be thrown into discard (i. e. repealed) at any time by any new law that may be enacted. There are a few exceptions

upon such trash! Those who prate about the "spirit of manliness" had better first make sure that they have always exhibited this spirit in their dealings with their fellow-men. Too often these "holier than thou" people exhibit intemperance in more ways than the poor unfortunate given to excessive drinking.

When the Prohibition law is repealed we shall have to commence all over again to make Prince Edward Island sober. We shall have to attend to the work of settling a huge problem, rightly after the huge settlement has been disposed of. Most of us are (as a State Senator of New York said) "tired of Prohibition, tired of the bootlegger, tired of the perpetual gamblers, tired of alcohol at social gatherings, tired of lawbreakers who do not themselves obey the law, but pass drastic enforcement statutes; tired of magistrates and judges, who, while themselves not obeying the law, prosecute others that they feel like doing nothing to clean it up. But the work must be done. We must not imagine that the job is done when the Prohibition law is repealed." We shall then need constructive legislation upon a careful study of the situation. That will require more brains, more goodwill, more patience, and more intellectual honesty than have thus far been shown on either side of the prohibition controversy.

I am, Sir, etc.,  
PRO MODERATIONE.

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**GENUINE OLD SYDNEY COAL**  
We are unloading cars of this good today. It is well screened. A. Pickard & Co. Phone 243.  
L-3009-2-21-31.

**CAVENDISH Pastoral Church**  
Services for Sunday, February 23rd. 11 A. M. New Glasgow; 3 P. M. Cavendish. Rev. W. A. Paterson, B. D., Minister. L-3044-2-22-11.

**FLAG AT HALF MAST**—The flag at the plant of Bruce Stewart & Co., Limited, is flying at half mast out of respect for one of their most out of respect for one of their directors, Hon. John McLean, who passed away at his home in Souris on Thursday last. Mr. McLean has been a valued director of the company since its incorporation in 1910.

**for PIMPLES**  
Add an equal amount of cream or sweet oil to the mixture once daily. A simple cure sure which you can't see!  
Clear up your skin!

**MINARD'S**  
"KING OF PAIN"  
LINIMENT