

THE DAILY EXAMINER

MARCH 16, 1899.

THE PREMIER AND PROHIBITION.

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S reasons for refusing to supply the complement of his plebiscite, viz, a prohibitory law, are published elsewhere. It will be seen that in this case Sir Wilfrid applies a principle which was not heretofore been recognized in respect to popular elections. If a plebiscite were held in any town or municipality in respect to sewerage or electric lighting, or tram cars, or any thing else, the result would be governed by the majority of votes cast. But Sir Wilfrid, it appears, requires for prohibition considerably more than a majority of all the votes there are to poll. Sir Wilfrid says:

"We are of the opinion that the fairest way of approaching the question is by the consideration of the total vote cast in favor of prohibition, leaving aside altogether the vote recorded against it. In that view of the question, the record shows that the electorate of Canada, to which the question was submitted, comprised 1,233,847 voters, and of that number less than twenty-three per cent, or a trifle over one fifth, affirmed their conviction in the principle of prohibition."

This is the device of ingenious shufflers. It was not suggested or thought of before the plebiscite was held. It will not be approved by men who are accustomed to see the most important questions of state decided by a majority of those who vote when given the opportunity. But, as the Montreal Star points out, "so far from leaving aside the vote against prohibition, the Premier has added to it all the votes that were not cast at all, arguing therefrom that his eminently just Government could not think of touching the question because it had only secured the support of 23 per cent. of the electorate. Thus Sir Wilfrid asserts that the man who did not vote, the dead man, the absentee, and all those who cared nothing one way or the other, really voted as effectually against prohibition as the opponent who went to the polls. This is one way of "leaving aside altogether" the "hostile vote."

Mr. Spence in the course of an interview says: "The opposition vote was smaller than ours, and we know of ballot-stuffing and other frauds in Quebec that made the anti-vote there appear much larger than it really was. The honest anti-vote was a much smaller percentage of the whole than ours, and there is no reason why it should be considered sufficient to prevent prohibition if ours was considered too small to warrant legislation."

It appears that, apart from Quebec the majority in favor of prohibition was 107,947; and of 148 constituencies, the prohibitionists carried 120 by an average majority of 1,042, or twenty per cent for prohibition, while the anti-prohibitionists polled less than 16 per cent. Mr. Spence declares that "it is absurd for the Premier to say that he cannot give prohibition to 23 per cent. but will withhold it for the 15 per cent." Mr. Spence continues:

"I think that prohibitionists will resent this action on the part of the Government. They asked us to vote, never suggesting that we would be counted out, even though we won, unless we polled a great vote. We have as good a right to claim the stay-at-home vote for prohibition as the Government has to count them against us. If stay-at-homes are opposition, the Liberal party was badly beaten at the last election,

If the Government counts percentage, they should look at the whole situation.

"The percentage of the voters' list in the different provinces, outside of Quebec, was:—Ontario, 27 for prohibition, and 20 against; New Brunswick 30 per cent. and less than eleven against; Nova Scotia, 37 for and 5 against; Prince Edward Island, 38 for and 4 against; Manitoba, 25 for and 6 against; N. W. T., 27 for and 3 against; and in British Columbia, 16 for and 13 against. Prohibitionists went into this campaign in good faith, believing that a victory would bring them prohibition, never imagining that a minority for the liquor traffic would be counted a victory against prohibition. The opposition strained every nerve and spent a vast amount of money. I consider this an outrageous treatment, if it were beaten by a majority of 13,925. On all principles of fairness, parliament has a right to enact legislation for which the people voted. Refusal to do it will raise intense indignation and a feeling that the prohibition cause has been treated with inexorable injustice."

The Montreal Witness, one of the strongest Liberal newspapers in all Canada, says:

"We are convinced that in shelving this great question by a simple flat refusal the government has taken a most perilous course, throwing itself open to the taunts of its political opponents in the House and to the anger of disappointed patriots in the country. The implied reflection in much that has been said by the government, that the prohibitionists are not in earnest, is certainly a challenge to those to show that they are. What is now possible to the good citizens who have been brought to think themselves within measurable distance of prohibition, only to have that hope indefinitely postponed, is to let their representatives know how they feel about it in sufficiently strong terms to strengthen the hands of those among them who are anxious, like themselves, to carry this reform, but who are at present complaining of the insufficiency of their moral backing."

These plain words are not unlikely to be followed by acts which may cause the sapient Premier some misgivings ere long. The temperance men of Canada can lose nothing, and their cause may gain much, if they show in a practical way that they resent the deception that has been practiced upon them.

KEEP THE STANLEY AT WORK HERE.

We are in receipt of a letter, evidently written some weeks ago, and somewhat out of date now, showing what the business men of this Province think of having the Stanley—which has practically been indebted to P. E. Island—sent here and there and everywhere at the order of the officials at Ottawa. We publish it as an expression of public opinion which may have some effect hereafter:

"I have a serious complaint to make. It is in reference to the orders given by the Department of Marine to Captain Finlayson of the S. S. Stanley to go to the assistance of the S. S. Gaspezia. It was reported only a few days since by a party of men who boarded the steamer that they were all well, plenty of coal and plenty of provisions. If this report is correct why the necessity of ordering away from us the Stanley our only means of exporting and importing goods at this season of the year to go to the assistance of a steamer whose owners and managers deserve to stand all the trouble and loss caused by such a fool-hardy venture as to expect to navigate the St. Lawrence at such a time of year? With the spring just now upon us with all its requirements, the loss of the S. S. Stanley to our importers and shippers is a very great one. We think truly the patience of the people of this Island is being tried to its extreme point, and regardless of party feeling we should raise our voices in stern indignation against such treatment. Much better treatment than this should be expected from our Minister with portfolio whose

influence with the present government is not showing up to very good advantage to the interest of his native Province.

"Then, again, parliament is summoned to meet in Ottawa on the 16th inst. and the only reasonable means of conveyance of passengers we have had at this season of the year is denied to our representatives from the Island in the Senate and House of Commons.

"Mr. Davies knows well the situation in this regard, and we think if he had had but human sympathy for his fellow Islanders he should have been able to exert sufficient influence with his colleagues to have left the Stanley with us to convey our representatives to Pictou as well as to carry our exports and imports across the straits. The whole affair savors of a rather Tarty appearance and it would not be surprising if the actual (not nominal) leader has had something to do in working up this scheme of most gross and outrageous injustice to the people of P. E. Island."

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

—The Montreal Witness depicts the horns of an immense bull entitled "The Liquor Question" and Sir Wilfrid Laurier clinging to one of the horns labeled "anti-prohibition." The Witness significantly says: "He has chosen his Horn at last."

—Mal and Empire: It is a fact that on the year's transactions, in spite of an addition of nearly two millions to the taxes, the debt has grown larger by the amount named, and this, notwithstanding that plank No. 1 of the policy promised that the Ministers would "stop the increase of the public debt and commence its reduction as quickly and as rapidly as possible."

—The management of the Canadian Home Journal is now entirely in the hands of Mr. H. Russell Hulton, he having taken over the interests of Mr. Sturgeon Stewart, who severs his connection with the publication of the magazine to become associated with the Methodist Book and Publishing House. The former gentleman will be assisted in the editorial work of the Journal by many leading Canadian writers, and its readers can rely on the future issues of the Journal being well worthy of its position as a Canadian paper for Canadian homes and women. The March issue of the magazine is well up to the higher standards of excellence.

—The Guardian says: "As a matter of fact the province is in quite as good a position to provide means for enforcing an act of its own as it is for providing the means to enforce the Scott Act." As a matter of fact the Scott Act was never satisfactorily enforced in Charlottetown. If reports are true, Summerside with its Scott Act, is in as bad a condition from the temperance point of view as Charlottetown is under "free rum." If it is desirable to put Charlottetown again under the Scott Act let this be done. The whole province will then be under a local prohibition just as complete and as effective as a provincial law could make it. What, therefore, is the use of talking about provincial prohibition,—except to humbug the people, and cause additional expense,—and divert attention from the failure of the Dominion Government to meet the expectations of prohibitionists who have heretofore voted for the Liberal party? Query,—what will the latter gentlemen do at the next election?

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CANADA. Province of Prince Edward Island In Chancery Before the Vice Chancellor

SOPHIA MARY McDONALD, and others—Complainants and RALPH BRECKEN, and others—Defendants.

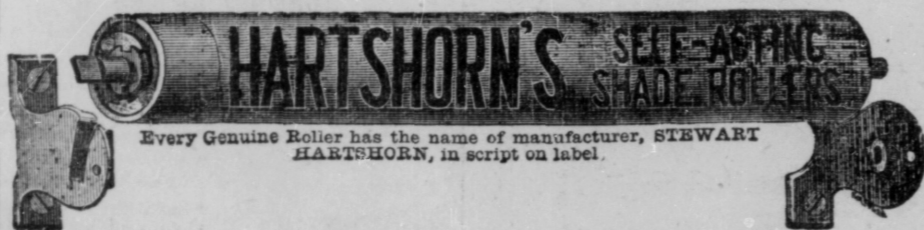
In pursuance of an order of this Honorable Court made herein on the eleventh day of November, A. D., 1898, notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against the estate of the late Benjamin Evans Wright, of Belmont, in the County of Charlottetown, in Queen's County, in said Island, deceased, intestate, are required to come in and prove the same before me at the Prothonotary's office in the Law Courts Building in Charlottetown on or before Tuesday, the fourth day of April, A. D. eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and all persons neglecting to come in and prove their said debts and claims by that time are to be excluded from the benefit of said order.

Dated this eighth day of March, A. D. 1899.

J. A. LONGWORTH, Master in Chancery.

W. S. STEWART, Q. C. Comp'l's Solicitor.

Tues, Thurs, Sat, till 1st prox.



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