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RICHIBUCTO, N. B., MARCH 16, 1899

THE PROHIBITION QUESTION.

Sir Wilfred Laurier has communicated to the Secretary of the Dominion Alliance the decision of his government not to accede to the request of the Alliance for the introduction of prohibitory legislation as a consequence of the plebiscite. In this communication the Premier, after quoting the official figures of the vote for and against the principle of prohibition, states that the reason guiding the cabinet in their decision is that less than 23 per cent. of the total electorate of Canada placed themselves on record in favour of it. "If we remember," says Sir Wilfred, "that the object of the plebiscite was to give an opportunity to those who have at heart the cause of prohibition, who believed that the people were with them, and that if the question were voted upon by itself without any other issue which might detract from its consideration, a majority of the electorate would respond and thus show the Canadian people prepared and ready for its adoption, it must be admitted that the expectation was not justified by the event." That this temperate statement is more than borne out by the facts, we presume even the most ardent prohibitionist will admit, for the whole press of Canada of all shades of political opinion virtually agreed after the plebiscite election that the vote was inconclusive and scarcely showed such a consensus of public opinion as to justify any Government in introducing such important and far-reaching legislation. Out of a total vote in Canada of 1,233,849 to which the question was submitted, 278,487 voted yea and 264,571 nay, while considerably more than half of the electorate made no answer whatever. The argument which will be used in certain quarters, for political effect, that the Government should accept the majority vote and introduce prohibitory legislation is idle in the face of facts which prove conclusively that in Canada the active temperance sentiment is not sufficiently powerful or predominant to make such legislation actually effective. We take it that the aim of the prohibitionists is the suppression of the liquor traffic and not the mere satisfaction of passing useless temperance legislation which in the absence of a fairly united public opinion to support it cannot hope to eradicate the evil of intemperance. To pass such legislation at this time would in our humble judgment be a criminal yielding to political consideration, for it would simply mean the placing of a premium on smuggling and illicit distilling, and make our people law breakers without the accomplishment of the end aimed at. Laws effecting the habits and

customs of a people should have a more solid public opinion behind them than the plebiscite would seem to show is back of prohibitory legislation. To use Sir Wilfred's words: "I venture to submit for your consideration and the consideration of the members of the Dominion Alliance, who believe in prohibition as the most efficient means of suppressing the evils of intemperance, that no good purpose would be served by forcing upon the people a measure which is shown by the vote to have the support of less than 23 per cent. of the electorate. My object is simply to convey to you the conclusion that in our judgment the expression of public opinion recorded at the polls in favour of prohibition did not represent such a proportion of the electorate as would justify the introduction by the government of a prohibitory measure."

We have no doubt now that a cabinet decision has been announced, the whole Tory machine from Vancouver to St. John will work itself into a frenzy of righteous indignation at what such papers as the Montreal Star and St. John Sun will call the perfidy of the Government, but we believe that the moderate thinking people of the Dominion irrespective of political lines will commend the Laurier Administration for their firm stand for sound legislation in Canada. We believe that the trend of popular opinion is and will be more and more in favour of the abolition of the liquor traffic as a voluntary evil which is working great hardship and productive of a great proportion of our crime, and that in time the people of Canada will be educated up to a consensus of opinion in support of prohibitory legislation. To pass such legislation at this stage would mean the setting back of the temperance sentiment another fifty years. Nor is this mere guess work for we in New Brunswick have had the experience of prohibition, which, owing to the lack of public support, did not prohibit, and would not wish to repeat the experience by the passing of a Dominion Prohibition Law in the face of the inconclusive vote of last September.

SENATE REFORM.

The proposition to introduce a measure in the coming session of Parliament for the reform of the arbitrary power of the Senate has met with general approval. The provisions of the British North America Act for a Senate appointed for life, in no way responsible to the people, and with no appeal from action such a body might take in preventing legislation introduced by the popular branch of the House, have always been considered the one serious defect in our otherwise democratic form of government. To view this movement in the light of a reprisal for the Senate's action in defeating certain government legislation is unwarranted and childish yet in the Opposition press this has been the whole tone of the discussion. At the time of Confederation the constitution of the Upper Chamber was the one subject on which there was the greatest diversity of opinion, and the form adopted was regarded at the best as a tentative plan which might very properly be modified if found unworkable or distasteful to the electorate of the Dominion. Since that time there has been a growing feeling that the plan adopted was not the one most conducive to popular legislation and at times the dissatisfaction has become so keen as to prompt the abolition of the Canadian House of Lords. Our people being keenly democratic in their ideas have felt that the institution of an oligarchy uncontrolled by the people was incon-

sistent, and as an evidence of such belief the different Provinces have been slowly but surely abolishing the Provincial Senates. To refuse reform in the Canadian Senate would in our belief merely lead in time to the abolition of this body which would in our opinion be an unwise step. The whole question should be discussed without the intervention of political bias as being a matter of public interest and in no way to be considered a party question. We believe that the proper reform of the Senate would be along the lines of making that body elective for a term of eight or ten years, and by the insertion of a provision in case of dead lock providing for a joint session of the two houses. Such an amendment of our constitution would remedy the error committed in 1867 by the establishment of an irresponsible oligarchy controlling our legislation which must be regarded by all thinking men as a glaring anomaly in the Canadian democracy. To take the view that whatever is, is right may be good Conservative doctrine and that because the Senate has existed in its present shape for over thirty years that it must be considered as beyond reform, but our people are not disposed to accept such illogical logic and demand the best in government that the brain of our leaders can devise.

We believe moreover that the introduction of Senate Reform Resolutions in our Provincial Assemblies is a proper and consistent course, for the original idea of the Senate constitution was the protection of the individual Provincial rights and the prevention of the assumption of arbitrary power in the Parliament of Canada by the larger Provinces. This has proved to be an unfounded fear but it would seem a reasonable course that the suggestion for the reform of the Senate should come from the local assemblies. The action of Nova Scotia and Ontario should spur on our own Local Assembly to similar action in order that the hands of the central government may be sufficiently strengthened to amend the Confederation Act in the desired way. We sincerely hope that such amendment will result in a greater usefulness of the Senate by it becoming something more important than a refuge for aged and infirm politicians. Canada can no longer afford to permit one branch of its federal legislature to act merely as a party cog to prevent the popular will from being carried into effect. Our Senate, if properly constituted and regulated, might be made productive of useful legislation and capable of originating much that would be of benefit to the country. No effort should be spared to bring about this happy result and its consummation would be another convincing proof of the soundness of the popular verdict on the 23rd of June, 1896.

THAT SILLY CORRESPONDENT AGAIN.

In our issue of December 8th, 1898, we referred at some length to the foolish and malicious correspondence of the St. John Sun sent from this town and urged the young man who was responsible for it to retire to his yard stick and leave journalism to abler hands. We were happy to think that our advice had been followed, but of late we have noticed a renewal of the trouble. Our embryo journalist wires his paper in connection with the rumor that Mr. Urbain Johnson, M. P. P., was being urged to resign his seat in favour of the Hon. A. D. Richard, that "Mr. Johnson has been visited during the week by Messrs. Barnes and Leger, M. P. P.'s, and other party heelers." Now one would naturally think that the modesty which is usually the

Creeping Consumption

Do not think for a single moment that consumption will ever strike you a sudden blow. It does not come that way. It creeps its way along. First, you think it is a little cold; nothing but a little hacking cough; then a little loss in weight; then a harder cough; then the fever and the night sweats. The suddenness comes when you have a hemorrhage. Better stop the disease while it is yet creeping. You can do it with

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DR. J. C. AYER, Lowell, Mass.

accompaniment of insignificance would prevent such a display of malicious spite as the denouncing of our county members as political heelers. The fact that these gentlemen have but a few short weeks ago been returned by the overwhelming popular verdict makes this insult the more foolish and uncalled for as it is really an attempt to insult the popular judgment. But we fancy from the wording of the dispatch that the insult was more particularly intended for one of the most respected citizens of the county, and one to whom the people of Kent would more particularly regret such a public insult being offered. The gentleman who accompanied Mr. Leger to St. Louis is generally known as a clerical gentleman from the southern end of the county, and one would have thought that the position of the gentleman referred to and his public spirited actions for very many years would have placed him above such contemptible criticism by any citizen of Kent. We regret the action of this correspondent and in apologizing for it to the public can only hope that our advice to him to retire to his yard stick will be accepted more seriously and permanently than on the occasion of his former outburst, and that we will not have to again refer to a continuance of this malicious correspondence.

A CLERGYMAN'S DEATH.

REV. H. DOUCETT OF JACQUET; PUBLIC WORKS IN GLOUCESTER.
BATHURST, March 9.—Rev. Hilarius Doucett, parish priest of Jacquet River, died at his residence at eleven o'clock last night, aged forty-eight years. The deceased was suffering from an attack of la grippe, which developed during the last few days into pneumonia. Father Doucett was a son of the late Edward D. Doucett, of Bathurst. When the parish of Bathurst was divided the deceased was first pastor of the town, and served for four years, being then called to Jacquet River, where he has been for fourteen years. Fr. Doucett was a favorite with all who knew him and will be greatly missed.
Engineer George A. Day, of the Public Works department, is in town to-day on his return from Shippegan and Caraquet, where he has been engaged making surveys for the construction of public wharves at both places.

WALKER'S ANODYNE LINIMENT.

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IN RE PROHIBITION.

NO MEASURE WILL BE INTRODUCED.

TORONTO, March 11.—Premier Laurier's views on the subject of a prohibitory measure are contained in the following letter to F. S. Spence secretary of the Dominion Alliance.

OTTAWA, March 4.—Dear Mr. Spence: When the delegation of the Dominion Alliance waited upon the government last fall to ask as a consequence of the plebiscite, the introduction of prohibitory legislation, they based their demand upon the fact that on the total of vote cast there was a majority in favor of the principle of prohibition. The exact figures of the votes recorded were not at that time accurately known, but the official figures, which we have now, show that on the question put to the electors, 278,487 voted yea, and 264,571 voted nay. After the official figures had been made public, it was contended by some of the opponents of prohibition that the margin of difference between that majority and minority was so slight that it practically constituted a tie, and there was therefore no occasion for the government to pronounce either one way or the other.

The government does not share that view. 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.

In that view of the question, the record shows that the electorate of Canada to which the question was submitted, comprised 1,233,849 voters, and of that number less than 23 per cent, or a trifle over one-fifth, affirmed their conviction in the principle of prohibition.

If we remember that the object of the plebiscite was to give an opportunity to those who have at heart the cause of prohibition, who believed that the people were with them and that if the question were voted upon by itself, without any other issue which might detract from its consideration, a majority of the electorate would respond and thus show the Canadian people prepared and ready for its adoption.

It must be admitted that that expectation was not justified by the event. On the other hand, it was argued before us by yourself and others, that as the plebiscite campaign was carried out by the friends of prohibition without any expenditure of money and without the usual excitement of political agitation, the vote recorded in favor of it was comparatively a large one. This statement I did not then controvert, nor do I controvert it

here and now. I would simply remark that the honesty of the vote did not suffer from the absence of those causes of excitement and that even if the totality of the vote might have been somewhat increased by such cause, its moral force would not have been made any stronger.

I venture to submit for your consideration and the consideration of the members of the Dominion Alliance, who believe in prohibition as the most efficient means of suppressing the evils of intemperance, that no good purpose would be served by forcing upon the people a measure which is shown by the vote to have the support of less than 23 per cent of the electorate. Neither would it serve any good purpose to enter here into further controversy on the many incidental points discussed before us. My object is simply to convey to you the conclusion that in our judgment the expression of public opinion recorded at the polls in favor of prohibition did not represent such a proportion of the electorate as would justify the introduction by the government of a prohibitory measure.

I have the honor to be
Dear Mr. Spence,
Yours very sincerely,
WILFRID LAURIER.

KIDNEY-BLADDER TROUBLE

There is no more serious menace to good health in the present age than Kidney disorders, and it's an appalling fact, but a true one, that four-fifths of the country's people have the taint of this insidious disease with them. Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills cure all Kidney disease.

A GREAT NUGGET.

ONE WEIGHING TWENTY POUNDS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN AUSTRALIA.

SAN FRANCISCO, March 11.—The steamer Alameda brings news of the finding of a gold nugget in West Australia weighing twenty and a half pounds avoirdupois. The strike was made early in February by McFie brothers and a man named Parkes, about twenty miles from Marble Bar in the Pilbarra gold fields.

The massive slug, together with over 200 ounces of smaller size, was uncovered just two miles north of where the pantomime nugget, weighing 34 ounces was found by a man named Boyle nine years ago.

SAVED THE BABY. "Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry saved my baby's life. She was cutting her teeth and was taken ill with Diarrhoea very badly. My sister advised Fowler's Strawberry. I got a bottle and it stopped the trouble at once." Mrs. Peter Jones, Warkworth, Ont.