PROGRESS.

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NO NEW LAW IS NEEDED.

PROHIBITION WOULD BE A BAD THING FOR ST. JOHN.

The Experience of the City when Licenses Were Not Issued—The Condition of Affairs under the Scott Act in Old Portland—St. John a Sober City.

The most disgraceful and continual display of drunkenness ever known in St. John was in the summer of 1854, the one year in which no liquor licenses were granted. It was a time of all others when men should have avoided strong drink, for it was the year of the cholera and the intemperate man took his life in his hands. Yet prohibition had been thought to be the one thing the country needed, and the legislature had enacted a prohibitory law, which it was glad to repeat a few months later. While it was in force, however, there was practically free trade in rum. No license fee was required, and all who chose could deal in liquor, which in the majority of cases was of the vilest description. It was plain that prohibition did not prohibit, and that instead of the evil being crushed it assumed a new and infinitely more deadly form.

A third of a century later, there was a similar experience in what was then the city of Portland. The Scott Act had been carried in the county, but Portland having become a city there was a doubt as to how far the law applied to it. No licenses were granted, but for three years liquor was sold as it never had been before and as it is to be hoped it never will be again. There were at least one hundred bar-rooms, publicly known as such, while liquor was to be bought in many private houses and in stores which were ostensibly for the sale of other goods. At the foot of Portland, in a distance of a hundred yards, were no less than seven bar-rooms in full blast. Men who could not get a license in the city of St. John had merely to move acoss the line and sell to their heart's content. Little capital was required. A few jugs and bottles of liquor with some cheap glasses sufficed for an outfit, and whatever may have been the quality of the stuff in the first instance, it was reduced and fortified until it became the veritable fighting whiskey which drove men to all sorts of desperate acts. So numerous were the bar-rooms and so keen the competition that many of the dealers actually stood in their doorways and solicited custom, waylaying the laboring men on their way to and from work and offering all kinds of inducements for people to drink. These places were kept open until all hours of the night, and they held high carnival all day Sunday. There was no regulating them. They were simply an unmitigated evil. The condition of affairs beggars description, and had it not been that Portland became a part of St. John and the License Law was enforced, it is hard to tell to what extent the mischief would have spread. Under the License Law now, the North End is a place where very little drunkenness is seen and where the best of order is found in the streets at all hours of the day and night.

Some citizens who undoubtedly believe they have the best interests of the people in view are now trying to bring about a no-license condition of affairs in St. John. The movement originated in the decision of the people of Carleton to have no license granted on that side of the harbor. That was well enough. Carleton is in many ways a suburban town, and in such places prohibition is practical. There are enough bar-rooms on the east side to supply all the needs of the west side, and there was no need of a license in a place where none had been. If the people of any of one the city wards did not want a tavern in that ward they would be within their rights in protesting against it, but it is by no means a logical conclusion that what may apply to any one district will apply to the city as a whole. No licenses are granted on Waterloo street, for instance, but to apply the same idea to every street would be very bad policy. There are a certain number of the people of the city who drink, and while the city stands there will be a certain portion who do so. If they cannot get it under sanction of the law they will get it without that sanction. The saloon is a crop that never fails.

The action of the Carleton people encouraged the prohibition element to undertake the stopping of the sale of liquor in the whole city, and petitions have been in circulation asking that no licenses be granted for the current year. The law provides that if a majority of the ratepayers, assessed on real or personal property, so petition, no licenses shall issue. The work of securing signatures was undertaken with great vigor, but it has proven a harder task than was imagined at the outset, for a majority means not only more than half of the resident ratepayers, but of non-residents and estates as well. Even should a majority sign such a petition, however, it would necessarily include Carleton ratepayers, who in strict justice should have no voice in the matter, whatever their legal right may be. A majority swelled by a Carleton vote is not an expression of the people who are immediately concerned in the question of license for the East side alone.

The prohibitionists have another gun loaded, however, and it is in the form of an amendment to the existing law. At present the number of licenses is limited and the man who wants one has to secure the signature of one third of the ratepayers in his district. This condition prevents a great number of improper persons from engaging in the traffic. Should a licensee be convicted of illegal selling three times in a year, he cannot be licensed the next year. The law is as good a one as is needed, and the fact that it is not fairly applied is no argument against it. It regulates the traffic, even as it is, and as regards orderly licensed places, St. John has nothing to fear in comparison with any city of its size in America.

The legislation now sought compels the applicant for license to secure the signature of one half the rate-payers in his district. This means prohibition. When the number of non-residents and of people who never sign petitions is considered, the work of getting a majority of signatures is such that the liquor dealers are unlikely to trouble themselves about it. They will simply sell without license and fight the matter so far as the fight can be waged. Should the final decision be adverse to them some of the more reputable dealers may retire, while their places will be filled by a greater number who are not reputable. It will be the old story of St. John in 1854 and of Portland in the latter part of the eighties. The city will lose the license fees to the amount of about $20,000 a year, and more liquor, and infinitely worse liquor, will be sold then is sold today. This is what prohibition will mean for St. John, and the question is, if in the face of such a prospect, there is anything to commend the legislation now sought by well meaning but unpractical men and women.

If prohibition could prohibit it would be a blessed thing, but even the advocates of the change have no such hope. They simply object to the city giving its sanction to the liquor traffic. They do not suggest any way in which the loss of revenue is to be made up, but on the contrary they say that such a question does not concern them. They do dot care what the city loses, provided they can have their theory made a part of the law.

The Maine law is as sound and practical a prohibitory enactment as can be devised, and is carried out with zeal, yet there is more drunkenness in Portland than in St. John, and the dens are of the lowest class. The Scott Act is a failure in cities and its adoption in St John would be a mistake. A still worse mistake would be the unlicensed sale of liquor without even the protection of the Scott Act.

The city of St. John stands high as regards the general sobriety of its people. There is less liquor sold than there was even a few years ago, and despite the fact that the police now arrest very often when there is no need of their doing so, the number of arrests for drunkenness is smaller than it formerly was. In former times, the police only arrested when a man was incapable or disorderly, but nowadays the prospect of getting relief from duty after making a night arrest tempts some of them to go beyond their duty and seize men slightly drunk. The figures of today should be discounted for a fair proportion of arrests which would not have been made in Chief Marshall's time, but even without this allowance the comparisons speak well for the sobriety of the people at the present day. In 1863, for instance, there were 759 arrests for drunkenness in the old city and Carleton alone, and 382 intoxicated persons were helped home. This would mean over 1,000 arrests had the present grab-all system been in force, and yet the population at that time was only a trifle over 27,000. There was about the same number on the following year, while in 1865, the number of arrests was nearly 900, not counting the people seen home.

In 1874, the number of arrests for drunkenness was 1,258. In 1878, it was 1,448. For some reason it dropped to less than 700 in 1881, but that was an exceptional year.

In 1894, the total number of arrests for drunkeness in the united city, including the North end, was only 763 and last year it was 769.

It will thus be seen that intoxication is not increasing in St. John under the License law, but there would be a very different story were the experiment tried of a year without license.

Congratulations to the Doctor.

Dr. Geo. A. Hetherington is the recipient of many congratulations, in which PROGRESS joins, on his appointment to the position of superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum. The choice is a good one, and the Doctor, in a political sense, has fully merited this recognition of his services.

IS A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE MUDDLE IN REGARD TO THE APPRAISER'S OFFICE.

Double, Double, Toil and Trouble as Found in the Revised Version of the Drama of McBeath—Preventive Officer Kelly and How He Was Appointed.

James Kelly reported for duty at the custom house on Friday of last week and was assigned to work in the appraiser's office. This does not mean that he has been appointed appraiser. He has not been, nor is he likely to be. He is a preventive officer, and as such may be assigned to duty anywhere. He is under Appraiser McBeath just now, but next month he may be under Inspector Timothy Burke in the Inland Revenue office, or he may be detailed to accompany his distinguished namesake, Inspector John Kelly, on an official visit to the light-houses. A preventive officer may be made to fit in anywhere, and there seems a great deal of uncertainty as to where Mr. Kelly is best fitted to shine as a Dominion official. All that is definite is that he has an office, though what the salary was to be nobody seemed to know, and it is rumored that Mr. Kelly himself was quite in the dark on this important point, until yesterday, when it was announced in the House of Commons that the compensation was $1,000 a year.

The whole performance of the government in regard to the appraiser's office would furnish ample material for a comic opera. The St. John members undertook to procure the office of chief appraiser for James H. Hamilton, who had fully earned some position by his work for the party. To put him in place it was necessary to put Mr. McBeath out of place. Mr. Hamilton told them he did not want to do anything to injure Mr. McBeath but he was told that the latter gentleman was to be superannuated in any case, and that he, Hamilton, might as well urge his claims for the position. He did so and the St. John members went ahead with the programme. Up to a certain point they met with great success.

There was no earthly reason why Mr. McBeath should be superannuated, except that the office was wanted for somebody else. He was not disqualified by age. He was a most efficient officer and he was held in high esteem by the merchants. During the second week in January, however, word came that Mr. McBeath was superannuated and that Mr. Hamilton had been appointed in his place. Pending the arrival of the official notification Mr. Hamilton was the recipient of many congratulations.

In due season Mr. McBeath got notice of his superannuation, closed up his books and retired. A petition that he be reinstated had in the meantime been forwarded to Ottawa. Yet though Mr. McBeath went out, Mr. Hamilton did not go in. Like Mordecai, he sat at the gate, and he is still sitting there, despite the unfavorable character of the season for standing or sitting around gates of any kind.

The St. John members, in the same stroke by which they had procured Mr. McBeath's retirement had, as they supposed, secured Mr. Hamilton's appointment. The order containing Mr. Hamilton's name as appraiser had been duly made out, but had not been formally passed upon. At this juncture Mr. Kelly went to Ottawa and saw his friend Mackenzie Bowell.

The two were not strangers. They had met on previous occasions of critical moment when the country was supposed to be in danger and the counsel of Mr. Kelly was freely given to avert the impending disaster. On this occasion R. W. Brother Kelly wanted an office and M. W. Brother Bowell, believing that Mr. Kelly controlled the Orange vote in New Brunswick, set about to find him an office. The appraisership seemed to fit him, and Bowell was willing that he should have it, quite regardless of what the St. John members might think.

Then, according to the story, an extraordinary thing thing was done. The identical paper in which Mr. Hamilton's name had been written was used for Mr. Kelly. The word "James" was left in and the "H. Hamilton" struck out and "Kelly" substituted. This made the order to read that Kelly was to be appointed as appraiser at St. John.

When this had been done, Mr. C. N. Skinner arrived in Ottawa. He was called there by Bowell on business which had nothing to do with the Kelly matter. It is to be assumed that he said many good words for his friend Kelly, but in some way or another Bowell seems to have learned that Kelly not only did not control the orange vote in New Brunswick but was not in any way qualified for the important post of appraisier. Then another queer thing was done. The word "appraiser" was struck out of the already altered order, and the wards "preventive officer" were substituted. In this form the order was passed and that is the appointment that Mr. Kelley really got and what he holds today. There is no more reason why he should have been put on duty in the appraiser's office than there was that he should have been sent to any other department, and the current opinion is that he will be set at work somewhere else at an early day.

Last Tuesday Mr. McBeath walked into the appraiser's office and resumed his old position. He had been reinstated, though the curious fact remains that he is on the superannuated list and must stay there. He therefore gets his retiring allowance and an additional sum to make his salary equal to what it was before. This is the same kind of a case as that of Mr. Gardner in the Immigration office. The worst of it in Mr. McBeath's case, is that having now been superannuated, he has all the allowance he can ever get. He may continue to hold the office for years before age compels him to retire, but all the additional years from this time forward will not count for an increased allowance, as they would have done in the ordinary course of things.

Mr. Hamilton will probably be appointed as assistant to Mr. McBeath and with an equally good salary. That seems to be the easiest way out of the difficulty, and a fitting finale to this comedy of errors.

FAIR PLAY FOR THE BENCH.

The Telegraph Surprises Its Friends by Its Defence of Judge Tuck.

Under the caption of "Let the Judges have Fair-play" the Telegraph of Monday had an energetic editorial article in defence of Judge Tuck in answer to a first page story in PROGRESS last week. The Telegraph's article was, no doubt, an inspired one, but whether the inspiration came directly from Judge Tuck himself or from some close friend, there can be little doubt that it will defeat the object intended. Apart from the merits of the case altogether, there was great indignation and disgust among liberals everywhere that such an article should have appeared in the Telegraph, the once great liberal paper of the Maritime provinces, a paper which still claims to speak on behalf of the liberal party. Rightly or wrongly the almost unanimous feeling among liberals in New Brunswick is that Judge Tuck has never forgotten that he was once a politician, of which they think the Queens county election case among other things furnishes some evidence. To say, therefore that the average liberal is mad with the Telegraph for its article in defence of the Judge, is to put the matter very mildly indeed. With that view of the case, however, PROGRESS is not concerned.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Judge Tuck will escape having an examination made of his private and public conduct after the challenge thrown out in his behalf by the Telegraph of Monday. If it is found upon full inquiry that he is the truly good man the Telegraph decribes him to be, then many people will no doubt ask to be forgiven for having so long had the impression that Judge Tuck was not of the class of men out of which chief justices should be made. Apart altogether from the question as to whether Judge Tuck is the best living example on the present bench of all that constitutes a worthy judge—one who will command the confidence of other members of the bench and of the bar—there has been all along an idea that he lacks a few at least of the qualities which should be found in a gentleman who aspires to be at the head of the bench of this Province.

The article in the Telegraph in his behalf says that the "attacks upon him seem to be inspired from some quarter which is interested in seeing him lessened to the esteem of his fellow men." That is entirely incorrect. That esteem must depend upon the judge's own character and conduct. This paper has no feeling against Judge Tuck and never has had any. It has always considered him a hail fellow, well met, but the fact that a man may be a pleasant enough associate in everyday life is no reason why that strong quality should entitle him to a chief justiceship. Any story which PROGRESS has published with which Judge Tuck's name was directly or indirectly connected, has been simply a narrative of an actual occurrence and not even a private occurrence either, and it is the greatest absurdity for anyone on the judge's behalf to say such publication has been inspired with a view of injuring him. If the circumstances reflect upon His Honor, so much the worse for him, but PROGRESS should not be held responsible if on some occasions on the bench Judge Tuck displays the qualities of a scold rather than the dignity of a judge; if at other times he attempts to "run" the Supreme court en bloc without any regard for the feelings of his brother judges, and if again he goes out of his way to talk while off the bench in a boisterous and offensive way about some of his associates, and is not careful to maintain that circumspection which is essential to the dignity of his position and to the efficient discharge of his responsible duties. The insinuation that PROGRESS is concerned in promoting the interests of some other candidate for the chief justiceship, is entirely without foundation, although it is free to express what is believed to be a common opinion, that there is a judge, on the bench who would make an excellent chief justice. His name, it need scarcely be said, is not Mr Justice Tuck.

THAT HOSPITAL AFFAIR.

THE HALIFAX SCANDAL IS BEING INVESTIGATED.

Dr. Chisholm of the Medical Staff and His Startling Surprise—Counter Charges of Inefficency—The Superintendent of Nurses Generally Censuree on all Sides.

HALIFAX, Feb., 27.—The investigation into the Victoria general hospital management has begun before Premier Fielding's commission. The proceedings are in secrecy, but people have a pretty good idea of what in general terms will come before the commission, at least on one side of the question.

A story is going the rounds, for instance that a young lady who was employed in the office of the steward, bursar and dispurser, assisting in the keeping of accounts, either came to know too much, or was too inquistive by long odds, for the management. They accordingly decided to act according to precedent. It was argued that if the superintendent of the hospital could be "promoted" for incompetency from the hospital for the insane to the Victoria hospital, that, therefore, this young lady in question could, with equal reason, be "promoted" from the accountant's office to a position of importance in the kitchen. The logic of it seemed so convincing that this was what they did, and downward, or upward which was it, she was bidden go.

The medical board, as stated by PROGRESS last week have in effect unanimously petitioned against Superintendent Ried on the ground of inefficiency or carelessness. It would not be a bad idea for Dr. Ried to bring a counter charge against the medical board based on Dr. Chisholm's "surprise." A patient came to the hospital and was for two months under treatment for a diseased knee. No one imagined there was anything else wrong with her. Dr. Chisholm, a prominent member of the board, made regular visits as in duty and in conscience bound. The patient apparently received every attention from all concerned in her case. One fine morning the young woman surprised the nurses and Dr. Chisholm by presenting to them and him a bouncing baby. This was so little dreamed of so little expected, that, as it was Dr. Chisholm's month in charge at the hospital, the new-comer was labelled "Dr. Chisholm's surprise." Now possibly it would not be a bad idea for Dr. Reid to strike back at the medical board and charge them with inefficiency for one reason on account of this unwelcome and unbidden and unexpected arrival at the hospital. Would it not be possible for Superintendent Reid to effectively ask this question: "Why should the medical board and its representative on this occasion, Dr. Chisholm, have remained so ignorant of the condition of a patient for two months in the hospital if they were "efficient and careful?" Possibly Dr. Ried might use this case to turn the tables upon his accusers, and probably no one would blame him if he did."

Steward Puttner, it is understood defends his confiscation of delicacies sent to the hospital to "charity patients" by saying that the rules of the institution authorized him to prevent such things falling into the hands of this class of patients, or possibly into the hands of any other patients, without the knowledge of the attending physicians. But what became of Dr. Murphy's delicacies about which he has lodged a complaint against Mr. Puttner, and what about other delicacies regarding which as yet there has been no specific charge? If the patients did not eat them who did? Were they sent over to the poor's asylum adjoining, where aged and imfirm and deserving paupers might have something more than plain though wholesome bill of fare which the city provides for the more than 200 wards of civic charity? There is no trace of those confiscated good articles in that quarter. If the hospital patients were not to be allowed to indulge in those things who were, and who did? Echo seems to answer: "who were and who did?"

Usually when such trouble arises as this, which now distracts a noble institution like the Victoria general hospital, there are partizans of the contending parties, people, or officials take sides. But in this case, and more particularly regarding the superintendant of nurses, there is no such division. It looks like Miss Elliott on the one side and a whole phalanx of nurses or of student nurses on the other.

"Well, in all my days, I never came into contact with eleven men so stubborn and so little amenable to reason. For four days they have held out "against me."

And this isolated juryman entered upon the fifth day in the hope that ere sunset the eleven men might lose somewhat of their perversity and agree with him upon a verdict which he had drawn up for their acquiescence.

Nestor of the Press.

In the death of Adam W. Smith, so long identified with the St. Andrew's Standard, the province loses its oldest editor, and one for whom both the past and the present generations have had a kindly regard. Mr. Smith was a man who worked long and faithfully with small reward for his labor, but he will long be remembered as journalist with qualities of heart which are not too common. He had many friends, and no enemies; his life was a useful one, and he has gone hence leaving behind an unsullied reputation.

THAT FORGED BOND.

One of the Most Peculiar Cases That Has Ever Happened Here.

The arrest of Ernest C. March on Wednesday night, charged with the forgery of a school bond for $2,000 has created more public speculation than any event in local police matters for many years past. As the preliminary examination had not taken place when PROGRESS went to press, little can be said in regard to the case, though if a very small portion of what is public talk were given in print it would be by far the most interesting reading that has been seen for many a day.

Justice to living and dead alike, as well as the proprieties necessary to be observed in a pending investigation, prevent such a story as might be written. The more facts are that a school bond for $2,000, never issued by the board, has unexpectedly turned up, it having been part of the assets of the estate of the late T. Partelow Mott, held by the Bank of New Brunswick for the last six years. Every six months during that period Mr. Mott cut off the coupons of this 277 A bond, but never presented them for payment, and thus the existence of the bond was not even suspected nor would it have been discovered until the bond matured years hence, had not Mr. Mott died. Then the bank, which held the bond as security, sold it to J. Morris Robinson. When he presented a coupon for redemption, the school board first become aware of the forgery.

The forged bond bears the genuine signature of the late John Boyd, chairman, and is filled out in the handwriting of Ernest March, a fact which he does not deny, but for which he says he cannot account. The signature of John March, secretary, is declared to be a forgery. As Ernest March seemed to be the only one who could be got at he was put under arrest. Whether he be innocent or guilty, the universal belief is "there are others."

Many theories can be advanced as to how Mr. Boyd came to sign a bond not afterwards accounted for, but those who knew the trustful and in some ways careless disposition of that gentleman can understand how he might sign a paper and at a later date sign another under the impression that he had not signed in the first instance. The regular bonds, Number 1277, and 278 were taken by Mr. Boyd himself, but several months passed between the time he agreed to take them and the time he completed the transaction. It is a good theory that he affixed his signature to both at the outset, that in the interval No. 277 was abstracted, made No. 277 A and only No 278 remained in the vault. When the time came for Mr. Boyd to take his bonds, only No 278 was to be found, and under the impression that only one had been made out another No 277 was prepared and signed by Mr. Boyd. This theory does not necessarily implicate the man at present accused, who may have filled out the bonds as a matter of routine and with no more wrongful intent than Mr. Boyd himself.

How the bond got into the possession of Partelow Mott, and why for more than six years he regularly cut off the coupons but never presented them remains to be seen.

Another very curious circumstance is that, in 1893, Secretary Manning signed for 41 coupons at the Bank of New Brunswick, but when he came to check them, after having left them lying in the school trustees office, he found only 40. The bank official who had delivered them to him was the late Ludlow Robinson, a most accurate man, and it seems hardly probable there was any mistake in the count. If not was the missing coupon that of 277 A, or was it an uncancelled coupon of some other bond? In any case, if Mr. Manning got it, who took it from the envelope after it reached the school trustees office? It certainly was not Ernest March, for he was not around the office. If anybody else had knowledge of the forged bond, who was that person?

That Partelow Mott knew of the character of the bond he held seems a conclusion that cannot be avoided. The question is, how many more knew of it, and who are they.

The Late Mr. Ward.

The death of Mr. Charles C. Ward is a real loss to the world of art, and many who have known him only through his paintings will mourn his taking away. He was a true artist, who threw his soul into his work and whose studies were from the natural scenes in which his heart took delight. The works he has left will be his best monument, and they will cause him to be honored by the generations to come in an even greater measure than his genius has been appreciated by the people of today.