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## PROHIBITION BILL IS BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE

Was Introduced on Thursday by Attorney General Baxter--May Not go Into Effect Until May 1st, 1917--Will Not Effect York County until Scott Act is Repeated.

The prohibition measure was introduced in the House on Thursday afternoon by the Attorney General, who in his speech had been confined to the merits of the bill and the history of similar legislation, would have made an abler presentation.

It is said that the prohibitory law is not to go into effect until May 1, 1917, a year from now.

The new law will not in itself affect York and other Scott Act counties, but such counties may adopt it if they choose.

It will forbid the sale of intoxicants, but allow the sale of beers. It is reported that the percentage of alcohol in these beers is not to be allowed to exceed two per cent. That provision is not yet complete.

It is understood that a referendum will be had after the war, or after prohibition has had a trial, to give the people a chance to say whether they want to continue it or return to the license system.

But Hon. Mr. Baxter could not refrain from politics and personalities, and made statements which detracted greatly from his introduction of a non-partisan measure. Some of these statements were both false and foolish, particularly those which tried to impute unworthy motives to opposition leaders, in advocating prohibition. Mr. Baxter stated that a "certain man"—he did not even dare to take advantage of his parliamentary privilege to use his name—was consorting in certain places with representatives of the liquor interests and was giving them the assurance that the party to which he belonged had no sympathy, no part and no lot with prohibition.

That statement is absolutely untrue. There never was any conference by the gentleman Mr. Baxter evidently referred to with any liquor dealers or with any temperance representatives with respect to prohibition.

Hon. Mr. Baxter also referred to the charges made by E. S. Carter before Royal Commissioner Chandler, and with many abusive adjectives showed how tender the subject was. His reference to "keeping the lid on and refusing to investigate" was unfortunate, because everyone knows that Mr. Chandler was not permitted to investigate Mr. Carter's charges that a fund was raised from the liquor dealers in which prominent Government workers were concerned. Everyone knows, at least in St. John, that his own legal associate was active with another legal gentleman in promoting the interests of the liquor dealers during the last session in Fredericton, and everyone also knows that when Mr. Carter brought suit against the Standard newspaper every possible effort was made by Mr. Baxter himself, acting for the Standard, to prevent the case being brought to trial, and the facts disclosed. His success in having the action thrown out of court prevented the facts from becoming public property. But the end of that has not been reached.

### Should Give the Name.

Hon. Mr. Baxter's proper course now is to give the name of the Opposition leader who made the alleged speech in convention, and also to state who conferred with the liquor dealers and who were their representatives.

The Opposition has no "lid to keep on." Their determination to bring prohibition before their convention in January was made at an executive meeting long before even the Dominion Alliance approached the government, and some report of this evidently hastened the government's consent to the request of the Alliance which was announced but a few days prior to the Opposition convention.

It is understood that some changes will be made in the bill as printed. Instead of the percentage of beer being fixed by the Governor in Council it will be made two per cent. While Mr. Baxter gave as an excuse for delaying the referendum until after the war because of the war, still it was pointed out that

the temperance people will have to work and vote for the repeal of the Scott Act before the Prohibition Act would become operative in those counties where the C. T. A. is in force.

### The Bill Introduced.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said it became his duty on behalf of the Government to introduce a measure which was one of the most important of those introduced into the House for many years which related to a subject which was very closely holding the attention of the people of the Province at the present time. It was an act for the suppression of the traffic of intoxicating liquors. That was not the first occasion on which such an enactment had been presented to the Legislature of this province and by it carried into law. There was in force from the 1st of January to the 1st of July in the year 1856, a prohibitory act for a similar purpose to that which he was then introducing, but it was enforced for a short time only until the people had an opportunity to vote it down. Possibly they of the present day, looking back over past years, would assume that that bill was in advance of public thought at that time. That was the only conclusion that under the circumstances they could reach, and that a great change must have come over public sentiment when the Government of the present day felt justified in once again introducing a bill of a prohibitory nature. He asked them to remark what a wonderful change must have come over public opinion in that event. History was not measured by years, but by the changes in the sentiments and opinions of the people. Any advanced legislation must have behind it the force of public opinion to carry it through without that vitality of force success would be impossible. The opponents of the measure were many and powerful and were sparing no effort to influence public opinion to their way of thinking.

### The Scott Act.

Already there had been some experiments in prohibitory legislation, perhaps they should not be called experiments exactly, but they might more properly be called enactments, which marked the crest of the wave of public opinion from time to time. One was the Scott Act, which had done good work. It had enabled particular districts to achieve prohibition, and the experience of that act had been before the public for many years. It was the child of Ontario, but had swept all over the Dominion; but today Ontario was almost free of the Scott Act and districts which had adopted it at first have since abandoned it. At the present time the principal stronghold of that act was the Maritime Provinces and particularly New Brunswick, for Nova Scotia and P. E. Island were now practically under prohibition. It was easy to enact legislation which says that a person shall not do any certain thing, and then leave him to do just as he pleased. There were hundreds of things which were forbidden to be done, but they were done regularly all the same. The Ten Commandments were a very good example of prohibitory legislation, but the things prohibited were done regularly, nevertheless.

### To Provide Machinery.

Continuing, Mr. Baxter said: We expect to lay before this House a prohibitory law which will have in it the power of vindication and will have the machinery which can and will be set in force to vindicate the enforcement of that law. We are legislating today on something that rises entirely above the party trammels and discussions; and I say that the greatest curse in connection with the Canada Temperance Act is that it has left the enforcement of the plan to a system of inspectors appointed by the councils of cities, towns or municipalities, and that almost every election for these offices of aldermen or councillors has been turned into a fight between what are popularly known as the rum party and anti-rum party.

People could enforce the Scott Act if they wanted to, but the machinery for selecting those who shall enforce it is radically defective. We can give them a better implement and I believe that better implement is contained in the bill which I am now presenting to this House.

### Big Section Now Dry.

As to the progress of temperance sentiment, I may say that in New Brunswick today in nine counties we have a population living under the Canada Temperance Act, which aims to be prohibitory, of 197,370. Under local option—when I say that I mean having refused to grant licenses under the local option provisions—we have

106,950 of a population. It is fair to say that part of that population consists of wards in the city of St. John where there is local option, and that perhaps it does not matter very much there, because the wards are adjacent to wards in which there is the sale of liquor under license. Still, the territory which is inhabited by 106,950 has declared so far as the law permits in favor of actual prohibition. So 304,320 people in the province of New Brunswick are living under some form of prohibition, and living under license the small number of 47,569.

### Would Not Repeal It.

In Northumberland, in Westmorland, in York and Charlotte, from one to three times efforts have been made to repeal the Scott Act, and have not been successful; in Kings county an effort was made but not enough signatures were obtained to the petitions to call for a vote; in Carleton, Albert, Sunbury and Queens no effort has been made.

### Direct Legislation.

Today, besides the large number of States in the United States, we know that Manitoba has adopted an act very similar to the one I am presenting today; Alberta has an act under the direct legislation plan, prepared by the temperance people, and submitted to a referendum and carried by a large majority, under which it becomes the duty of their legislature to enact it without substantial alteration at the next session, and it either is or will be law within a very short time. Saskatchewan has restricted the sale of liquor. As to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, you are just as familiar as I am and the conditions in Ontario we are reading about in the newspapers. There they are bringing, as we propose to do, the Act into force without a referendum, by direct legislation.

The titanic struggle which now engages our Empire has produced new associations among people, men and nations. It has broken down in part at least the traditions of centuries, which have expressed themselves in fixed divisions between classes of men. It has brought about as nothing else could the great unity of purpose of our people, raised the spirit of self-sacrifice, and awakened us to a realization of our mutual obligations.

### Changed Conditions.

Today I may sum it up by saying we are living in a new world, which is gradually emerging from the fragments of the old, not only morally and socially, but economically. Ideas have been revolutionized. Today nations are turning their attention to the husbanding of their resources as never before, not only within the confines of Germany, where for the sake of food and carrying on necessary industries they have had to preserve every scrap of material useful for food or purposes of industry, but the British Empire is doing the same thing.

### Must Respect the Law.

I do not think that I need discuss the question of whether prohibition prohibits. That depends, as I said, upon you and upon me. If those in the community who hold the moral forces under their particular care—if they do their duty—if they let petty things go and if they stand back of the men who enforce a law of this character, and if they stand in front of the men who live under the law, and urge those men to respect the law—for without respect the law becomes of no value whatever—to respect this law as they would any other law—if the moral and social leaders of our country will but rise to the occasion and do their duty, there is no fear but that a prohibitory law, like any other law, can be enforced within the province of New Brunswick. This government has done its duty. It put in the hands of a gentleman who has given a tremendous amount of time and most careful research to the work the preparation of this law. We did not, as has been done before by others, write down with one hand something to apparently give to the seekers for prohibition that which they desire, and with the other hand write something to defeat the purpose, the spirit and the object of the legislation.

Hon. Mr. Baxter took occasion to deny the report that the liquor dealers of St. John had been forced by agents of the Government to contribute to a campaign fund. He also made reference to the attitude of the Opposition on the question.

### No Referendum.

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Continuing, the speaker said: I said I would say something about the referendum before I closed. We have decided that there shall not be a referendum before bringing the act into force; that the act shall be province wide in its operation, a prohibitory law for the whole province of New Brunswick. It cannot at present—because Dominion legislation prevails in the Scott Act counties—come into full force in those counties, but it will come there just as soon as the people themselves repeal that enactment, or if the Dominion Government itself shall see fit to repeal it without taking a vote. Whether that will be done or not remains to be seen, but, sir, however much of the Province comes under the operation of our prohibitory act, after it has had a fair trial—after people have had an opportunity to see its working and to know whether they are prepared to stand behind it—after the people have had time to make up their minds—this Government will be prepared to give them an opportunity to vote upon the subject.

On the ground of urgency the bill was read a second time.

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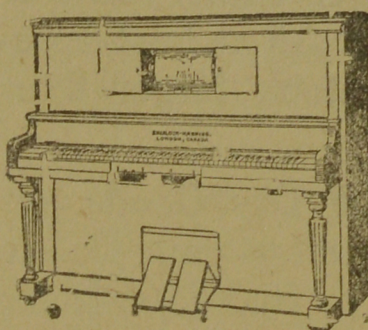
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