

# MASS MEETING OF CITIZENS IN FAVOR OF LOCAL OPTION

## Resolution Unanimously Adopted Approving of the Submission of By-Law to Ratepayers on January Next.

Strong Address Made by F. S. Spence of Toronto, J. P. Donald and J. D. Flavelle—Committee Appointed to Inaugurate Campaign.

A largely attended meeting of the citizens was held Friday evening in the town hall for the purpose of considering the question of the submission of a local option by-law to the ratepayers of Lindsay in January, 1910. Included in the gathering was a large delegation of ladies.

### THE CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. A. D. Kitchener was voted to the chair, and in his opening remarks he thanked the gathering for the honor. It was a matter of gratification to see the "citizens and women" referred to at the meeting a few evenings ago, turn out in such goodly numbers. The question before them was how they could minimize the terrible evil of intemperance. There was a difference of opinion regarding how this is to be brought about. The speakers of the evening would, he said, deal with the question in all its phases, and he invited any of those present who were opposed to local option and who desired to address the meeting, to a seat on the platform.

The question, the chairman further said, should be dealt with openly, fairly, and fairly in order to see what is the best way to face the problem. According to the press reports of the meeting held a few evenings ago the speaker presumed that the town would be deprived of proper accommodation if local option were introduced. It was the last thought of those behind local option to bring this state of affairs about, and he would assure them that they would see that the public would not suffer in this respect.

### MR. DONALD

I think that it is incumbent upon me, as I think it is on every citizen, to show just where we stand on a question like this. I will be honest with you and state that I have not just got it settled in my mind that local option or any other form of prohibition that has yet been tried, is the best way to handle this state of liquor over-drinking. I am not a temperance crank. I recognize the fact that as long as there is liquor manufactured there is going to be drinking done, more or less, license or no license. I have not solved to my own satisfaction the best way of regulating it, so that there would be the minimum of evil connected with it. I am one of those, however, who, if they cannot get a whole loaf will take a half a one, or even a slice, if that is all there is to be had, and give thanks and then look for more. So far, local option is seemingly the best thing presented yet, for reducing the evil to a minimum, therefore, I am prepared to try it. One thing above all others that would lead me to believe that it was a good thing is the case of Owen Sound. Three years ago they declared for local option, and despite the fact that the Mayor, during most of the period, was in sympathy with the liquor interests, and neglected his own duty to such an extent that other three years' trial the people carried it again, when its defeat would have meant tens of thousands of dollars to the liquor men. Now, I don't believe there are enough temperance cranks in Owen Sound which is twice the size of Lindsay, to muster up a sixty per cent vote the second time had the carrying out been a failure as some would have us believe. Is my logic right? I think it is. Another feature just about Owen Sound. Some one once said, in speaking against local option, cited Owen Sound and said that he had been there and paid \$2 for what was worth \$1. I don't know what he went to do, but it was the Seldon House I would give this statement the lie direct, and I have not been there lately. I have made it a point to ask our traveller, who covers that ground six times a year, and he informs me that there is no better managed hotel, nor where the boys feel more at

home, in all Western Ontario, than the Seldon house, Owen Sound. I will just read you an excerpt from another traveller's letter regarding Neepawa, Man. You will remember that Neepawa has been under local option since it was a town, until last year. It is not necessary to tell you the means that were used to carry the repeal, suffice it to say it was carried. Here is how they speak of it after a year's trial. (Mr. Donald here read a letter which stated that liquor flowed like water and farmers were being sued, who hitherto had paid their bills.) Now I just want to give you my reasons for wanting to banish the bar as far away as I can. I am the father of six boys. There are six solid, substantial reasons why I, at all events, should seek to put temptation out of the way. They are such reasons that defy anyone, be he banker, mayor, lawyer or merchant, to give me just reason why I should desist in my efforts. I am not one of those who think that a boy, or a girl either, should be brought up in a glass case. That sort of thing can't be done. You can leave the devil alone for that. At the same time, we pray daily to the Giver of all Good, "Lead us not into temptation" and then deliberately, with malice aforethought, if the antics carry the day, place temptation right in their way, and if one of them falls we go about wringing our hands, blaming everybody but ourselves, when as a matter of fact we ought to go down to the pound and have the biggest men in town kick us all over the lot. The same reason applies to those not so close to me—your boys, the boys and men in our employ, and every man, be he weak or strong. These people arguing against local option ask what are we going to do for hotel accommodation. We are not trying to abolish the hotels. The bar is not the hotel. I have travelled all over this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, probably as much as any man in this room, and I have had as much use for the bar as I have for a poisonshop, and I believe that is the experience of the majority of travellers. There is as much need, and would be as much connection for a bar in a dry goods store. The bar, as a bar, stands absolutely by itself, and the argument about the hotel accommodation is simply a blind. The mayor the other night gave as his reason for throwing the temperance people down after giving his word not to do anything to hinder the cutting off of two licenses, if the Council so decided, that there would not be yard accommodation for the farmers at fair time. That is, your boys are to buy enough whiskey to keep a lot of saloons going, that are not hotels that there may be stable room for farmers during five or six days in the year. Now, I will admit that farmers as a class are very near and selfish, but I decline to believe that the farmers of Victoria Co. would desire to submit our boys to that temptation for the present. Why I am told on reliable authority that there is enough money taken over the bars here in one week to build a palatial stable and give every horse in the surrounding country a staff with its name engraved over it, so that it can have the exclusive right to it. Now you will find all kinds of opposition to local option. 1. There is the trade itself. 2. There is the purely selfish man who has been in the habit of having his glass and who cares not one whit what happens your boy or mine, no, nor even his own boy, as long as his appetite is not interfered with. Then there is the merchant—the retail merchant, who is afraid of some fancied loss he is going to meet—is not big enough to look right into the matter and see that there is going to be a gain instead. But after all the people whom we ought really to be afraid of most, are those otherwise good citizens, who, having no direct interest in abolishing the evil, men who would as soon go in front of an engine as go into a bar, are lukewarm and will require prodding to get them to come out and vote. This thing is not going to be carried in a day or in a week or a month. We have got to talk and talk earnestly to every voter between now and next January, and in the meantime

get them to sign the petition, that will be presented, as necessary before the Council will pass the by-law.

### MR. SPENCE HEARD.

Mr. F. S. Spence, of Toronto, was next introduced by the speaker, and in his opening remarks that speaker said they had just heard a very strong case made out, in which the arguments were forcible and sufficiently convincing. There was very little use arguing on the question of temperance, and his object would be to explain what the local option law meant; its history and the machinery available for its enforcement. He would not be so presumptuous as to dictate to the citizens what to do. That matter was entirely in their own hands, but he would simply lay the facts before them without any ill will being shown.

### NO RIGHT TO CRITICIZE.

The speaker said he would not say hard words against the liquor traffic. There were men in the business who were personal friends of his, but he wanted to see the God given talents possessed by these men used in a different channel. These men go in behind the bar and sell liquor because it puts a revenue in their pockets, and we, as public citizens, permit it. Those on the outside have no right to criticize the lawful business of liquor selling until they, as citizens, dissolve the partnership by their vote. We know, however, what they were going to do in Lindsay. Mr. Spence said he had given considerable attention to the growth of the movement, and he looked for its absolute triumph at an early stage. The reason for his possessing such confidence was, in the first place, the nature of the movement. It was not a man made institution, but was the result of conditions, and also of the blighting and disastrous evils the vice of intemperance had wrought. If they could wipe temperance reform out of existence and leave the world with that dreaded evil, we would have the same struggle over again. It is God's cause, and is, therefore, bound to win.

### HISTORY OF MOVEMENT.

Never, in the history of the world, was launched a cause which made such a reform as this great crusade. Rev. Father Matthew started the first temperance society in Ireland in 1835 and in 1832 an organization was started in Preston by seven men. Previous to this time not a temperance society existed. We cannot imagine the potency the traffic had eighty years ago, but look at the change affected to-day. The history of the movement has been wonderful and gives assurance of its ultimate triumph.

### BLUNDERS ARE MADE.

Being pushed forward by its poor, weak mortals, the speaker said, it was only natural that blunders might be made, but it was through these same mistakes that the last rung in the ladder of success was reached. The youth who sat watching the tea kettle boil until the steam blew off the lid, brought an idea, and the result was the invention of the steam engine. The people said it was a great idea, but it was not capable of being worked out. It was improved until now the world's work is practically accomplished while men look on. It is just so with local option.

### EARLY TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES

When people started the first temperance society they had no idea of stopping drunkenness, but rather to discourage drinking to excess and had liquor at their sessions in order to illustrate to the members the best way of consuming it. They finally decided that they had been drinking the wrong kind, and then they started moderation by using beer and other beverages. The speaker remembered signing a pledge in which he promised not to drink too much liquor or too strong a liquor except at meal times. An American society had the following unique pledge:—"Whereas, we, the

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undersigned, are convinced of the disastrous effects to our country of the consumption of ardent spirits, will not drink ardent spirits except on Christmas, Fourth of July, and on Thanksgiving Day, and at sheep washings."

### TOTAL ABSTINENCE

The pledge of partial abstinence was next tried after moderation, but it did not work, and those behind the temperance cause were finally compelled to adopt total abstinence, which we have to-day. With the introduction of total abstinence the problem was thought to have been solved. The poor fellow was brought into the society and he took the pledge but went out again into temptation. You could count on your fingers, the speaker said, those who reformed and kept that way. Our boys were sent out and they are confronted with a sign over the door, Licensed to Sell. The temperance people say liquor is not good, but the Christian law said it was good. This state of affairs can only be met by united political action. That's where those behind the movement stand.

### THERE IS DANGER.

There is a danger, the speaker said, that in their eagerness to forward one particular plan they might forget another. When prohibition was won the fight would not be complete. They must go on and keep educating public opinion, keep up the fire of enthusiasm, and help humanity along the road to progress. It is not enough have a good law and no public opinion behind it? The Scott act was a good law, but it did not do all, because the wrong men were at the lever in its enforcement.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION

We now come up, the speaker said, to where we at present are. The cause will be a success if we have

1. Sound sentiment to back it up.
2. Wise laws on statute book.
3. Honest administration of the law.

The speaker saw intelligence behind the movement which gave him unbounded confidence, and it was wonderful the extent to which men were becoming imbued with it. To-day they were dealing successfully with the question all over the world, Finland had passed prohibitory legislation and Iceland had prohibited the sale and manufacture of liquor. The drink bill of Great Britain was \$30,000,000 less than the previous year.

### A GREAT SWEEP.

In the United States the temperance wave had wrought wonders. In Florida 520,000 people were outside of license law. Arkansas had abolished 317 saloons, Texas wiped out 800 saloons, and Louisiana had 32,000 square miles under practical prohibition. In Kentucky, the whisky state, there were 96 out of 115 counties under no license conditions. There are 18,000,000 people in the Southern States free from liquor out of 20,000,000. In New York city there are 1,000 more saloons than in the fourteen states of the south. In Illinois last year 1,300 towns voted on local option, and it was carried by 1,000 of them. Two weeks ago Nebraska passed a law prohibiting the sale of liquor after 8 o'clock in the evening, and before 7 in the morning. More than 35,000 people in the United States are living under prohibition.

### CONDITIONS IN CANADA.

The speaker next referred to the strides the movement has made in Canada. The Maritime provinces were first referred to. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had made great progress, being under prohibition. Prince Edward Island was a prohibition province.

In Quebec, owing to the good work of the Roman Catholic clergy, out of 1000 parishes 600 had prohibition. In Ontario 138 counties had no saloons and 136 places where no license conditions prevailed because the residents were unable to get properly signed petitions for licenses. Out of 807 municipalities 334 closed up the bar. If it were not for the three-fifths clause that number, the speaker said, would be doubled. Owen Sound, he claimed, was a testimony of the worth of local option. They tried it for three years and on the repeal vote being taken they gave it an emphatic endorsement. Of course where men can make money by violating the law, it will certainly be violated.

### THE REPEAL VOTE.

The speaker said that while he was not a Tory, he was a little bit of a conservative, and believed in the sound conservative principle that when you get a good thing hang on to it. At the end of the year 1908 110 municipalities had local option in force three years, and all of them could have repealed it by a majority vote. Twenty-nine only tried repeal, and it did not carry in any municipality except two small places in Bruce county and Lambton county. When it was first tried in these twenty-nine places 9,860 votes were registered in its favor. That number

had increased in the repeal vote to 11,812. Three years ago it was carried by a majority of 1,418 and repeal was defeated by a majority of 1,915.

### ONTARIO LICENSES

In 1875 there was 6,185 licensed places in Ontario and in 1909 the number had been reduced to 2,000. The speaker next gave statistics regarding the number of taverns in Ontario from 1875 to 1908 as follows: 1875, 13,007; 1880, 3899, 1885, 3,253; 1895, 2,870; 1905, 2,384; 1908, 2000.

### VICTORIA COUNTY LICENSES

In 1875 this county had 92 licensed places, 66 in 1880, 57 in 1885, 48 in 1890, 41 in 1895, 41 in 1900, 30 in 1905, and 26 in 1908.

None of these license places were in Lindsay, and accordingly as more people came in more licenses went out. Public opinion demanded it. The local option idea was the result of a long development of thought, and the local option law was also the development of thought. It was not the Dunkin and Scott acts again, but a measure which was the result of long study.

### CANADA'S CONSUMPTION.

Lindsay, the speaker said, was a pretty sober town. Canada drank six gallons per head of the population. United States 22 gallons and Great Britain 30 gallons. Canada drinks one sixth the amount they consume in any of the old world countries.

### PRETTY DECENT TOWN.

This is a pretty decent town, the speaker remarked, with only 8 hotels, and one shop. In regard to the statement made and the anxiety felt about the interests of the town being conserved, the speaker stated that the vote next January does not mean the abolition of the hotel. It will simply hit eight bars and one shop. How much do they effect the interests of the town, he asked? Every man who goes into these places to buy liquor comes out a poorer man than when he went in. How would it make the town better off by making it poorer?

### SOME CALCULATING.

Let us assume, Mr. Spence said, that only fifty men went into a bar in one day. Eight times 50 was 400. That meant there were 400 men poorer off. Let us suppose that no barroom in the town takes in more than \$35.00 a day. There are nine licensed places, which meant \$225.00 a day or \$67,500 for 90 days in the year. Some one is poorer as a result of this and the men who paid it as a rule could not afford it. Business men have had to do less business as a result. If a man had a \$5.00 bill and bought a pair of shoes, it was evident he needed the shoes more than he did the money. He was better off when he got them, and that purchase meant practically \$10 for both purchaser and merchant. He felt he was right in saying that in ten years \$690,000 had been spent over the bars in Lindsay, and the town was poorer by that amount.

### OUR DRINK BILL.

Canada spent \$76,000,000 for liquor last year, and is therefore that amount poorer. It is being done every year. The speaker said he did not argue that drink was the cause of all the poverty, but he believed poverty was responsible for a great deal of the evil. Many took to drink because of poverty, and had learned the appetite away back in the cursed

### TREATING SYSTEM.

In England liquor was a common thing, but it was not to be seen on the average Canadian table. Nine out of every ten of our boys between the ages of 16 and 18 years have no desire for liquor, but the desire to be a "fine fellow," and generous become manifest, and the invitation was extended to go in and have a drink. Ten years of fairly enforced local option law would leave us without the treating system.

### MORAL AND SOCIAL EVIL.

The speaker referred to the moral and social evil of drink, and asked his hearers if they were ever in a drunkard's home. Nine out of ten of these homes were the result of the treating system. The barroom made the drunkards. In Toronto last year

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## RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE MEETING

Resolved,—That this meeting of citizens of the town of Lindsay, after mature consideration of the matter are of the opinion that the time is ripe for local option, and that a committee be appointed to prepare and circulate a petition requesting the town council to submit a local option by-law at the next municipal election, and to take such other action in the matter as they consider advisable.—Carried.

### TO OVERTHROW TRAFFIC

Away behind these figures, Mr. Spence said, were tears and broken hearts. We are out to overthrow the liquor traffic in this Christian community. Local option was good in all respects, although he admitted its weakness. The law permits no selling where it is in force. The brewer can manufacture in a local option district, but cannot sell it there. The advantage of the law was in the absolute assurance of its validity. Ground was lost during the Scott act on account of the constitutionality of the measure. Local option was introduced by Sir Oliver Mowat and was approved by both political parties and the courts, including the privy council. It is valid and is the kind of a law the British people like to put in operation. It is a law that cannot go into operation unless the people want it. It applies merely to local municipalities and three-fifths of the votes are behind it. Furthermore, it is put into operation by the best voters—those who have a stake in the community, and thank God, the speaker said, the women are interested, and if both the married and single women had a chance they would wipe it out of existence.

### WAS A GOOD ACT.

Mr. Spence continuing said there were adequate penalties for the enforcement of this law. The Ontario liquor license act was a pretty good law, and was serving as a model for other countries. The speaker then pointed out the punishment that was meted out to those who violated the act. It was by its penalties that its enforcement would be a fraction of this law that amount goes into a license fund to be used for its enforcement. The speaker had no fault to find with the government. While the three-fifths clause hit the temperance people pretty hard, he desired to say that it was the best law enforcing government the province ever had.

### WOULD NOT ADVISE.

In concluding Mr. Spence referred to the great wave that was sweeping over the country and assured the audience that he did not desire to advise them, feeling confident that they would meet the situation as it confronted them.

### LOCAL OPTION WAS A PROVINCIAL LAW WITH A GOVERNMENT BEHIND IT.

Local option was a provincial law with a government behind it. The men who argue that local option is the Scott act again don't know what they are talking about. The question that will be asked next January is, are you in favor of the license law or local option?

### A GOOD MIXTURE.

Both, the speaker said, made a good mixture. He believed in the license law and was anxious to see what there was in it that was better than local option. The license law prohibits places from selling at certain times. In Lindsay there were 8,000 people under the license law. It said that 7,992 shall not sell liquor, while the remaining nine may. Local option says no one shall sell the bars are also limited by the license act in regard to time. They must not sell on polling day. Liquor was bad on that day, the speaker said. It made men drunk and they might put in the wrong mayor. Local option goes one better and stipulates that liquor must not be sold at any time.

The speaker made further comparisons in order to show the superiority of local option over the license system. Mr. Spence said he knew the law was weak, but there was not an argument advanced in favor of the liquor license act that could not be used in favor of local option.

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### MR. FLAVELLE'S STAND.

The chairman said the name of a respected citizen had been used quite freely in connection with the circulation of a certain petition, and it was only fair to that gentleman that he be given an opportunity to speak for himself.

Continued on page 6.

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