

HOUSE CONDEMNS TREATING CUSTOM

**But Not Sufficiently to Pass Bill
Against It.**

RELIES ON EDUCATION.

**Conditional Sales of Chattels
Bill Goes to Committee.**

**Legislature Devotes an Afternoon to
Moral Suasion—Much Hoped
From Growth of Public Sentiment—
Mr. Smith of Peel Brings up His
Women's Suffrage Measure.**

After the spirited discussion in the Legislature yesterday, which Mr. McNaught had acknowledged to be the chief purpose of his bill to prohibit the custom among Ontario men of treating each other to alcoholic liquids, and whose educative effect Premier Whitney hoped might be renewed from time to time, the bill was withdrawn from a second reading. There was a concurrence of opinion among those taking part in the debate as to the evil of the practice in creating habits of drunkenness. Mr. Smith's (Peel) bill to enfranchise widows and spinsters was deferred till to-morrow for serious consideration. Mr. Lucas' bill to protect farmers from the effects of contracts made for installment purchases led to a prolonged discussion. The bill introduced by Hon. Frank Cochrane, referring to waterpowers at Fort Frances, is dealt with elsewhere.

Toronto Government Jobs.

In reply to Mr. Atkinson, who asked how many stenographers, temporary clerks, messengers and other help had been taken on since January, 1905, in the public buildings in Toronto, Premier Whitney remarked that the custom of asking questions which were rather the proper subject for returns had during the present session departed entirely from precedent. He suggested that Mr. Atkinson move for a return.

Hon. Mr. Ross thought there was a good deal in what Premier Whitney said, but it had been found that quicker results were gained by question than by return.

Premier Whitney promised to have the return before the close of the session.

Hon. Mr. Ross thought that might be too late to be of any use.

In reply to Mr. Gamey, Hon. Mr. Foy stated that John A. Murphy was appointed County Crown Attorney on July 13, 1903. He was not a solicitor and had not been practising law previously. As a barrister Mr. Murphy was qualified to act.

In reply to Mr. MacKay, Premier Whitney said the Government had not considered the question of licensing and regulating hotels in municipalities where liquor licenses could not be granted.

Mr. Smith (Peel) moved the second reading of his bill to enable widows and spinsters otherwise properly qualified to exercise the franchise. It had been suggested because he withdrew the bill last year that he was not in earnest and he resented the idea. Several members wished to support the principle of the bill, and there was no truth in the view that he did not wish to press the subject. He only asked the favor in the case of widows and spinsters, from

whom a more intelligent vote might be obtained than from many manhood voters. Some men would hardly let them think, not to say act, but Mr. Smith citing the example of New Zealand, Australia, and other parts of the world, hoped for a liberal and gallant support for the measure.

Premier Whitney thought the matter might just as well be treated seriously. Mr. Smith had given no reasons why the bill should be adopted except that he thought it desirable. He suggested that the bill be allowed to stand till Friday, with the understanding that it then be treated seriously and put to a vote.

"Whoso Putteth the Bottle."

Mr. McNaught, in moving the second reading of his anti-treating bill, pointed out the intentions of the measure, which aimed to make treating unlawful, rendering the person liable to fine and imprisonment who offered to treat, and also punishing the hotelkeeper or servants who abetted. The bill aimed to reform the custom of the Province and bring it into conformity with European countries, where the custom was unknown. The excessive use of intoxicating liquor was a curse to any country. It was claimed by some that spirituous liquor was good as a medicine, but bad as a beverage. It was not so much the use as the abuse of it that made restrictive legislation necessary. Treating was not only at the root of the drinking evil, but created more drunkards than any other practice. When half a dozen men met in a bar or a club they usually treated all round, though any one of them would have called any person a fool who should have told him he was going to take six glasses of liquor when he left the house. A man must either walk out or reciprocate when a treat is offered, and the money so spent is often badly needed elsewhere. Habits so formed brought men to shame and disgrace, and that he was drawing no fancy picture might be verified any day. Such testimony was not confined to cities, but personally, and from scores of letters he had received, he believed it was infinitely worse in villages and country places. The treating habit was the occasion of three-fourths of the drunkenness of Canada, and the effect of the bill would be to reduce the amount of liquor consumed, and even to do away with drunkenness. Scarcely one in ten drank without treating, and to do away with treating would largely settle the whiskey question.

Was Foolish and Pernicious.

Mr. Preston (Brant), whatever was the outcome, considered Mr. McNaught had conferred an advantage by bringing the subject of the bill prominently forward. He thought a clear case had been made out, and reinforced the argument by a statement by the Moderate Drinkers' Club that treating was the "most foolish and pernicious habit that ever cursed society." It was very largely the cause of the increase in the consumption of liquor. Anti-treating legislation had already been adopted in New Hampshire and Vermont, and a bill in Ohio had progressed to a second reading. On account of its educative influence he desired to support the bill.

Mr. Clark had always been in favor of pulling in the reins on the liquor traffic as fast as public sentiment would allow. In the past he had favored such a law, and he believed that if it were adopted it could be enforced, chiefly because the feeling would be in favor of it. At the present time the law prohibiting members of the Legislature treating for a fixed period before elections was well obeyed.

Opposition Leader's Views.

Hon. Mr. Ross agreed cordially with the observations of the member for North Toronto. From the information which had reached him, and the opinions given by those in a position to know, he gathered that the treating habit was really an evil. It was a pity that the sociability of the Anglo-Saxon race should be, in this respect, a snare

to otherwise self-respecting members of society. True, it might take some time to convince the people that such restraint as that proposed in the bill was proper and in their best interests. Great advances had been made in the past, however, largely by the educative influence of the law. Every restraint imposed in respect to the liquor traffic was no doubt violated by somebody, but that had not prevented progress towards better things, and should not prevent a start being made now in the phase of the question under discussion. The educative effect of such a measure began now would continue to gain rapidly in strength. He thought the House should hesitate before rejecting this measure. A slight relaxation might perhaps be made in the bill in regard to privileges of members at meals in well-conducted club-houses. He had pleasure in supporting the measure.

Mr. Graham thought more young men learned to drink because they wanted to be sociable than from any other cause. Possibly 40 per cent. of the men who were drinkers in the Dominion never would have arrived at that condition but for their dislike to be unsociable when asked to take a glass with some open-hearted, jolly fellow. This measure was not for the mean man who never treated. It was for those who were too open-handed and generous.

Noticeable on Pay Nights.

One evil of the treating habit was specially noticeable on pay nights at industrial institutions. The men would go into hotels with the intention of taking just one drink and going home, and often because of the treating habit they spent all their money before they left the hotels. Mr. Graham thought there would be considerable difficulty in framing a law on the point which could be properly enforced. He suggested that clubs should file copies of their by-laws with the Provincial Secretary's Department so that there could be some wider supervision over them than now, by seeing that those by-laws were proper and were obeyed.

Was in a Receptive Mood.

The Premier expressed the opinion that the well-known evil of this habit rendered it unnecessary to dwell on that phase of the question. He hoped that this matter would not be dropped forever, but would be discussed from time to time until its educative strength would bring about largely the desired result. "Whenever it can be shown to me," he said, "and I am in a receptive mood, that legislation of this description is within our power and right, and, in addition to that, that it will have the desired effect, no man in this Province will go farther than I will in bringing this legislation about. I am not convinced on either of these points."

Continuing, the Premier said the great evil of the habit was the harm done to boys and youths, and every man of mature age ought to be willing to make every sacrifice to hasten the time when this habit would be abandoned. He spoke of the improved conditions in regard to drinking in Canada, which was once looked upon as a necessary accompaniment to the meetings of even the leading men of the community. A healthy sentiment and education had brought about a wonderful change. He did not think legislation of the nature mentioned advisable at this time, but he urged that in every possible way those who deprecated the evils of the drinking habit would continue the discussion and agitation until public sentiment had reached that stage where such legislation would be not only welcomed, but capable of enforcement. The bill was withdrawn.

Selling to Farmers on Time.

Mr. Lucas moved the second reading of what he called an innocent little measure to amend the act respecting condi-