

## LIBERALS BATTLING FOR A REAL REFORM

Mr. Rowell Delivers Powerful  
Address

### NEW POWER FOR BOARD

May "Declare Any District, Large or Small, Absolutely Dry," Says Mr. Hanna—A Brisk All-day Debate on Temperance in Legislature.

What the Government offers as temperance legislation "well abreast of public sentiment" the Opposition sharply and vigorously attacked in the Legislature yesterday afternoon and evening on the second reading of Hon. W. J. Hanna's bill to appoint a Provincial Commission to administer the liquor license law. The announcement that the debate would be taken up yesterday drew large crowds to the House that filled the galleries until a late hour and evidenced the fact that the temperance question is still a live issue in Ontario. Arguments by Opposition speakers asserted that the proposals of the Government were entirely inadequate to meet present-day conditions, and the amendment to the second reading, moved by Mr. Wm. Proudfoot (Centre Huron), after pointing out that the bill did not close a single bar or club in the Province or enlarge the power of the people to deal with the traffic now or after the war, called for a measure to at once close bars and clubs, to grant to the electors the right to say whether the drinking places should remain closed, and provide for more effective measures of wiping out the shops.

#### Mr. Rowell's Appeal.

The address of Mr. Rowell, which came shortly before midnight, was a scathing arraignment of the Government for its failure to give the Province a measure of progressive reform. The meagre provisions of the bill he denounced as a pitiable spectacle in a time of crisis. The Liberal leader was followed by Premier Hearst in an earnest defence of the Government's action.

#### The Newest Amendment.

Mr. Hanna's presentation of the Government's case was an amplification of his statement on the introduction of the bill, coupled with the announcement that a clause would be added to the section giving the Commission power to restrict the sale of liquor to any class of persons by giving additional authority to declare "any area, no matter how large or small, absolutely dry." The Provincial Secretary laid great stress on the character of the men to be selected for the Commission, who would not represent any particular class or section, to have no opposing interests on the Board. "I would like to say," he explained, "that it will be the work of the Government to see to it that this Commission is composed of the right kind of men, men who are not only in sympathy with the enforcement of the law, but with the betterment of the law and with the doing of what they think should be done from time to time to improve conditions with regard to this whole traffic."

#### Hon. Mr. Hanna's Claim.

Mr. Hanna, in moving the second reading of the bill, reiterated his remark of last week that he regarded the measure as the most important of its kind that had ever been introduc-

ed into the Legislature. Previous legislation under the present Government had all been in the direction of better enforcement of the liquor license law and minimizing the evils of the liquor traffic. The policy of the Conservative party had been before the electors of the Province at three general elections as the outstanding issue, first in 1908, with regard to the three-fifths clause; then in 1911, on the administration of the liquor license law, and again in 1914, on the question of abolish the bar. In the interval between the general elections of 1911 and 1914 there had been eleven bye-elections, and in every instance the electors had supported the policy of the Conservative party and given it a most emphatic endorsement.

#### Last General Election.

"I want to repeat now," said Mr. Hanna, "that the interpretation that this Government put upon the last general election is that the electors of this Province, when they voted for the Conservative candidates, said to the Conservative Government under Sir James Whitney, they said of Sir James Whitney's policy—and that is the policy of the Prime Minister today—(applause): 'You have done well up to date. We go to the polls and support you again; we support you not because we think you have gone to the point where you can afford to leave the question alone, we support you because we have confidence you will keep on and do better as the opportunity presents itself and the occasion demands.'"

#### Provincial License Board.

Proceeding, Mr. Hanna said that in the past the Government had received many suggestions for the management of the liquor traffic, but the one that seemed most likely to produce the best results was to establish a Provincial License Board. The success of this proposal, the Provincial Secretary declared, was in selecting men of sufficiently high calibre to administer the law apart from politics, apart from interference of any sort, with an eye only to the minimizing of the evils of the liquor traffic. To secure such a Commission would be the sole aim of the Government. The Government had secured men of a high type to serve on other Commissions so far appointed. He instanced Mr. J. L. Englehart, Chairman of the T. & N. O. Railway Commission; Sir Adam Beck of the Hydro-electric Power Commission, and the members of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

#### Powers of a Commission.

Emphasizing the wide powers that would be given to the Commission, Mr. Hanna referred to the provisions of the bill to enable the board to cut down the number of licenses in any district. It could determine the hours during which taverns and shops should remain open within the limits prescribed by the statute. The power to suspend or cancel licenses subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, he said, had met with some criticism, but he doubted if any Government would care to refuse the recommendation of any Commission unless on exceptional grounds.

The provision enabling the Commission to declare any district "absolutely dry," he said, if wisely managed could not fail to result in the better administration of the law.

In closing Mr. Hanna read comments from Liberal newspapers and The Pioneer, declaring that the Provincial Commission idea was a vast improvement on the present system, and, if the proper men could be secured to serve on it, should be productive of good results.

### Many Members Debate the Temperance Issue

Mr. A. H. Musgrove (North Huron) said one of the principal points in the administration of the liquor license law was good enforcement, and that was what was aimed at in the Government's proposals. There had to be a strong force of public opinion behind any movement to make it successful. He ventured the opinion that if the Liberals had been returned to power at the last election they would not have been able to carry out their policy. In his own riding