

ing feature, however, that a vote in June, 1919, would give the act a trial of close to three years. The people would have an opportunity of judging whether they wished to continue prohibition with the experience they had had during the two years and nine months it would have been in operation. On the other hand, if they wished to repeal the prohibition act they would have experience that would enable them to vote intelligently.

Protect Old License-holders.

"If the act now before the House should be repealed we have been asked what would likely be the position of the Government of that day—which no doubt will be the Government of the present day," said Mr. Hanna, his last phrase creating laughter. "I have no hesitation in saying that unless some substitute for the present order of things is found, and should the result of the referendum be that the Province will go back to the license system, then I think in the name of everything that is fair and right in regard to these interests (the present license-holders) they should have the first call on any license that might be issued as a result of the repeal. I would expect that it would be a strange thing indeed if any license board or Government did not give these license-holders first consideration in issuing licenses in that event."

Re-enacting Local Option.

Mr. William McDonald, North Bruce—Why should not local option places go back then? If care is taken of the license-holders, why not of local option places?

Mr. Hanna—It might well be that the Legislature at that time might enact that the liquor license laws now in force should be simply regarded as having been suspended, in which event the honorable member would find that everything would go back as it was before.

Mr. McDonald—Will things be just as they are?

Mr. Hanna—That might be a sane, sound, reasonable proposition.

Consideration of Leases.

Mr. John Allan (West Hamilton) observed that there was one thing that might be a hardship if the Ontario temperance act is passed. That was in reference to leases. A number of hotelmen had leases on their hands, some of them having two, three and four years to run. It would not be fair to put them out of business and keep them paying rent, he said.

Mr. Hanna said that was a subject that was receiving consideration; in fact they had given considerable thought and care to it. It was not an easy subject to dispose of. It would be easy enough to do it in some cases, but in other cases it would work out the wrong way. It might be that the solution for that again might be left somewhat to the discretion of the board of three provided for in the act. To attempt to make a law to fit all cases alike might work hardships in one direction greater than those they were attempting to cure. It might be that the License Board would be authorized to make application of a law that would be added to the present act before they were through with it, although they had not fully decided on that.

Form of the Referendum.

In reply to Mr. Rowell as to whether the referendum in June, 1919, would be submitted in the negative or the affirmative, Hon. Mr. Hanna said the Government had not yet reached a decision.

Mr. Rowell—I thought perhaps the form of the referendum might have been drafted.

Mr. Hanna replied that it had, but that it was safely locked up upstairs, and the gentleman who had the key was not in the chamber just then.

This was evidently a reference to the Law Clerk, who opened the door and entered just as Mr. Hanna was answering the question.

Date of Enforcement.

"I regret that the Government has not seen its way clear to make provision for an earlier enforcement of the act," said Mr. Rowell. "Personally I would rather see prohibition put in operation on July 1, in view of the fact that it is a war measure." Mr. Rowell would also have pre-

ferred to compensate licenseholders in some other form than by license extension. He had already stated that he did not want to be captious or critical, and as he had pressed his views on the Government with reference to the date when he thought prohibition should come into effect, it was not his intention to divide the committee or the House at that time with respect to the date upon which the act will go into operation.

"The act is so important and so far-reaching in its effect that while the date is later than I would have wished, I have no desire to mar the feeling of harmony prevailing among the members by dividing the House on the matter at this time," said Mr. Rowell. "I would favor some other method of providing relief to the licenseholders than the method of extending their licenses for a consideration. However, I hope the licenseholders will accept this relief in the spirit in which the House gives it, and I would ask them not only to carry out the spirit of the act, but to consider they have received fair treatment from this Legislature."

Mr. Rowell thought that the extension of the licenses to September 16 would enable the hotelkeepers and liquor merchants to dispose of their stocks, and he thought this should satisfy them.

Powers of the Provinces.

When the temperance bill was reached in committee Mr. Wm. McDonald (North Bruce) quoted the Hon. Mr. Doherty, Minister of Justice, to the effect that the Provinces already had power to prohibit the manufacture of liquor within their boundaries if it was found to lead to the infraction of any prohibitory law passed by them, but had not seen fit to exercise such power.

Hon. Mr. Hanna—The matter is not regarded as sufficiently free from doubt to justify embodying it in this legislation, and then perhaps jeopardize the whole bill.

Wholesale Druggists' Views.

Consideration was then given to various clauses in the bill. With reference to wholesale druggists' licenses, Mr. Hanna said a deputation had seen him that afternoon, and had strongly urged that the present status should not be interfered with.

"It may not be out of place to say here," he said, "that it was strongly urged that the wholesale end of the business would be better taken care of by a select one, whose standing in the trade would be some guarantee of the act being fairly observed." He had asked what number would be justified, having regard to the trade served, and the reply was that it would probably mean unprofitable business beyond one or two.

Mr. Proudfoot (West Huron)—Is there any intention of charging the retail druggists a license fee?

Mr. Hanna—If there is any charge at all I think it should be strictly nominal—a dollar or thereabouts. There are those who refuse to pay a dollar, and not because of the amount.

It was also proposed, he added, to make the wholesale druggists' license fee only a nominal one.

What Constitutes Intoxicating?

When the clause was reached as to what "liquors" mean, Mr. Hanna said in reply to Mr. Rowell that with regard to native wines it was proposed to give the License Board absolute control.

Mr. Rowell—The alcoholic content of liquors will be defined in the act?

Mr. Hanna—I think if we can do it in the case of native wines that we would have the right to do it with regard to any other beverage.

Mr. Rowell—For years we have had a very clear definition under our license act as to what constitutes intoxicating. It would be a rather serious departure to move away from that definition.

Mr. Hanna—We have not thought of putting a little joker in the act.

Mr. Rowell—The real point is: are we going to state that in the act?

Mr. Hanna—It has not been finally determined upon.