

FOUR TEMPERANCE QUESTIONS FOR ELECTORS OF ONTARIO

Each of Subjects Must be Voted on or the Ballot Will be Spoiled — Premier Hearst Announces Policy of the Government, Which is to Take Over Sale of Liquor and Establish Warehouses

Promises made by the Ontario Government in connection with its temperance policy are to be carried out under two bills which will be introduced in the Legislature within a day or two. Sir William Hearst made an important statement yesterday in the House, in which he announced the language of the four questions to be submitted to the electors in the referendum, likely this fall. At the same time he told of the provisions that will be incorporated in the Ontario Temperance Act to permit the Government to take over control of the sale of liquors in Ontario. The date on which the referendum is to be taken will be fixed by order in Council.

Each Question Stands Alone.

Each of the questions, the Prime Minister said, is to stand alone. Each of them must be voted on by the elector, otherwise the ballot will be spoiled. The questions are:

(1) Are you in favor of the repeal of the Ontario Temperance Act?

(2) Are you in favor of the sale of light beer containing not more than 2 51-100 per cent. alcohol weight measure through Government agencies, and amendments to the Ontario Temperance Act to permit such sale?

(3) Are you in favor of the sale of light beer containing not more than 2 51-100 per cent. alcohol weight measure in standard hotels in local municipalities that by majority vote favor such sale, and amendments to the Ontario Temperance Act to permit such sale?

(4) Are you in favor of the sale of spirituous and malt liquors through Government agencies, and amendments to the Ontario Temperance Act to permit such sale?

Local Option.

By the foregoing questions the Government hopes to get public opinion fairly expressed. It does not believe that if it submitted the one question as provided in the O. T. A.—the first of the four quoted above—it would be in the best interests of temperance. If the first question is carried it means that the old license law as it existed prior to 1916 will be revived. If the second question is answered by a majority in the affirmative the Government will have to make provision for the sale of light beer through Government sales agencies. If the third question is answered by a majority in the affirmative the Government

will at once make provision for the sale of light beer in standard hotels. However, it should be noted that even if the Province generally decides in favor of question three it is entirely a matter of local option as to it being put into force in the individual municipalities. In this case it will be a majority vote, as on the general question. There will be no three-fifths vote required as was the case under former legislation. If question four is carried the Government will have to make necessary regulations for the sale of all kinds of spirituous liquors in homes only.

It will be seen from the foregoing that if the bar does come back—and that is considered a remote possibility—it will be only for the sale of light beer, containing not more than 2 51-100 per cent. alcohol weight measure. Should the electors vote in favor of having the stronger liquors sold they can only be placed on sale through Government agencies. It will also be noted that while in all previous discussions "beer and wine" have been linked together, the latter is not mentioned in the questions to be submitted in the referendum.

While it is not considered at all probable, it is said that it is within the realm of possibility that if the act is not repealed and the other questions carry by affirmative votes, they, the three plans, could be carried out. Thus if the O. T. A. were to remain the law of the land, light beers could be sold through Government agencies by amendments to the act; then, too, if question three carried light beers could be sold through standard hotels by amendments to the act, and spirituous liquors could be sold through Government agencies by amendments to the act.

Light Beer Defined.

Light beer as defined by the Prime Minister includes "beer and any other malt liquor containing more than 2.51 per cent. of alcohol by weight; this expressed in proof spirits means 5.46 per cent., a little more than twice the alcoholic content of beer now permitted to be sold, which is 2 1-2 per cent. proof spirits."

The legislation to arrange for the taking of the referendum will be provided for in "The Temperance Referendum Act, 1919," whereas the provisions for Government control of the present sale of liquor will be carried out under amendments to the O.T.A. The plans for carrying out Government control of the sale of liquor provide for it being

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