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ONTARIO LIBERALS WILL NOT TINKER WITH PROHIBITION

F. Wellington Hay Makes Straightforward Declara- tion of Loyalty to O.T.A.

HAS NOTHING TO CONCEAL

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Hamilton, March 28.—Refreshing because of its absence of ambiguity or left and right hand promises, a candid declaration of policy respecting the Ontario Temperance Act was uttered to a representative audience of Liberals in the Royal Connaught tonight by F. Wellington Hay, Ontario Leader of the party, who said the will of the people in relation to the enforcement of the measure should be strictly observed.

So far as the Ontario Liberal party was concerned, there would be no modification, no weird experiments, no further vote on the question until another demand for a change comes from the people, and that demand has not come yet, in the opinion of Mr. Hay. He wondered if Mr. G. Howard Ferguson would be as frank.

A Straightforward Declaration.

Near the conclusion of a lengthy address, the keynote of which was that more capable business men and fewer politicians should have the administration of Ontario's destinies, Mr. Hay touched on the Ontario Temperance Act.

"I might as well declare myself now," he said. "There is nothing to conceal about Liberalism's attitude on this question—a question, I feel, on which there ought to be plain public speaking. The bringing in of the O.T.A. was due to the co-operation of Ontario Liberals with the Hearst Government. We do not deny that. We have no reason to do so. It was enforced as a war measure, with the proviso that the soldiers should vote on it when they returned from overseas. Subsequent votes have shown with what acclaim the people of this Province have endorsed that measure.

"So far as we, the Liberals of Ontario, stand, I say the will of the people in relation to the enforcement of the O.T.A. should be strictly obeyed. When there is a demand for a change—and we do not think there is that demand as yet—a new vote will be on a question defined on broad lines, so that the matter shall be fully determined one way or the other. Whatever the verdict of the people may be, that verdict shall be respected if the Liberals are the dominating party in this Province."

No Pact With U.F.O. Party.

Ontario was in sorry plight at present for lack of capable business administrators, said Mr. Hay. What was needed most was a Government with the ability to administer present laws rather than to create new ones.

Liberalism was not unsympathetic toward the farmer; it welcomed him to the fold of the party, but because a man was a farmer he had no right to expect he and his fellows should direct all the affairs of this Province. This was why the present Government was not a representative one.

Regarding rumors of a possible coalition between the Liberals and the U.F.O., Mr. Hay set these at rest when he said that if those in sympathy with the present U.F.O.-Labor combination really wanted stable Government, they should come over and cast their lot with Ontario Liberals, for the latter would survive long after the former two had passed on.

Startling Jump in Debt.

Thomas Marshall, M.P.P. of Lincoln county, criticized the lack of initiative shown by the various Cabinet Ministers of the Government. There never was a time in Ontario's history, he said, when men of larger calibre and broader vision were needed. He said the interest on the Provincial debt was now \$6,500,000, whereas in 1904, under a Liberal administration, the entire Provincial debt was only \$5,000,000—less even than the interest on the debt is now.

Mr. Hay made his first official appearance in Hamilton tonight, and he was tendered a flattering ovation. Russell Treleaven, President, was in the chair. John Newlands, Vice-President, introduced Mr. Marshall. Russell Collins led the community singing. Liberals were present from many points in the district.