

March 12<sup>th</sup> Wed.

### Will Never Be Satisfactory.

L. W. Oke, Progressive member for East Lambton, stated that he believed more time should have been given for the present Attorney-General to administer the act with a view to determining its working. But he believed that "the Ontario Temperance Act could never be administered to the entire satisfaction of the people of Ontario."

### Wants a Longer Trial.

Hon. H. C. Nixon, Progressive member for North Brant, stated that his constituents were not in favor of the submission of either a plebiscite or a referendum at the present juncture, believing that the O.T.A. had not had a sufficient trial to justify a move toward a change.

The former Provincial Secretary stated that the form of the bill before the House had no precedent in any Province or in the Dominion. To call it a "blank cheque" was to put it too mildly, he said, because it really constituted a sheaf of blank cheques.

J. A. Sangster, Liberal member for Glengarry, took the view that if questions were to be submitted to the people everything should be clear and aboveboard for the representatives of the people to decide upon. If the matter were properly dealt with, he said, it might prove to be a final and conclusive settling of the vexed issue of temperance. He did not see the necessity for a multiplicity of words in the debate, because apparently the Government had decided the course of the Legislature in the matter. He supported the Liberal policy as expressed by his Leader, W. E. N. Sinclair, K.C.

### Whence Comes the Demand?

R. H. Kemp, Progressive member for Lincoln, reiterated the demand upon the Government that before being asked to pass the bill the Government show wherein lay the demand of the people for an opportunity to pass upon the O.T.A.

"On the contrary," he said, "we have shown you where there is considerable demand that a question be not submitted."

Mr. Raney—Hear, hear.

A Conservative member coughed or laughed, and the former Attorney-General retorted with, "Pure insolence."

Mr. Kemp declared that the Legislature, in passing the enabling referendum bill, was tying its hands on what the question would be and on the legislation that was to follow if a favorable vote were returned.

### If He Were a Cartoonist—

M. M. MacBride (Independent Labor member for Brantford) declared that if there was one thing more than another in the minds of the electorate during the election of last June it was the idea of the necessity for a return to responsible Government. A former "so-called" Government, he declared, had for four years adopted a policy the very opposite of the principle of responsible government. In that connection Mr. MacBride noted the Gregory Commission and the Sandy bill. Proceeding, he stated that if he were a cartoonist he would picture the old horse "Prohibition" lean and hungry, his ribs sticking out of his sides, with a big head and scraggy neck, and on that horse, he thought, he could very well depict certain honorable gentlemen.

"In my opinion," he said, "the Government's policy is living up to the very highest ideals, as we know them in British countries."

### First Big Drum for Temperance.

Sam Clarke, Liberal member for Northumberland, combated the arguments put forward by other speakers that the Conservative party had done more for temperance than any other party in the Province. Thirty years ago, he said within a few miles of where he lived, there were ten or twelve country taverns; today there was not one. The time those hotels were put out of commission was when Hon. Newton Rowell brought in his motion to abolish the bar all over the Prov-

ince of Ontario. "That was the first big drum ever beat for temperance in the Province of Ontario, and don't you forget it," he declared.

The Attorney-General had never said a truer word than when he said last week that the Ontario Temperance Act of 1916 had passed the House unanimously, Mr. Clarke continued. But look what led up to it, he added. Not one member of the Government on Mr. Rowell's motion voted with the Opposition; no one in the House opposed Sir William Hearst's measure.

The passing of the O.T.A. was the only credit standing to the Conservative party in Ontario "from the time I have known them to the present time, on the line of temperance." The O.T.A. child never was properly treated by its Conservative party parents, he said, but the ex-Attorney-General never had abused or disowned the child. "You people over there," he said, waving his hand toward the Conservatives, "created and made the law, but you never helped to support it in your life."

### Five Per Cent. Beer.

He appealed to the Attorney-General to continue to enforce the act for another year, and then any defects to be remedied would have the unanimous support of the House. Speaking as an individual, and not for the Liberal party, Mr. Clarke declared to the Attorney-General that he believed that if he gave the people "five per cent. beer (in my opinion you can't get drunk on five per cent. beer) it would satisfy eight-tenths of all the grumbling you have all over the Province of Ontario."

"It is a thousand times better," he added, "to give the people five per cent. beer and try it out than to open up gin, rum, whiskey, the hard drinks." He urged the Government to be big enough to give the people the thin edge in place of the whole wedge.

### A Light for the Wets.

M. A. McCallum, Progressive member for South Bruce, twitted the Conservative party with having blandly "placed the light in the window" for the benefit of the wet electorate of the Province. The Government's attitude, he said, had simply been one of invitation to press for a plebiscite. He believed no change in the law was required or asked for by any body of public opinion.

Mr. McCallum deemed the \$15,000,000 deficit to be a fleabite in importance alongside the great moral question of temperance. In defending the O. T. A., he said that even if there were some drinking in the Province, it had been driven under cover, which was something to the act's credit.

George Elliott (Conservative, North Middlesex) expressed absolute confidence in the Ferguson Government to handle the situation justly, and at considerable length he went on to review what he deemed to be the shortcomings of the Liberal party in days gone by on the temperance problem. The Prime Minister had said it was impossible to get an expression of opinion without this bill, and if public opinion demanded it, it would be within the power of the Government to grant a vote after the passage of the bill.

### "Uncalled For," Says Fenton.

W. H. Fenton (Progressive, North Bruce) declared the bill to be "unnecessary, uncalled for, and unasked for." He thought the Attorney-General should be allowed to give longer trial to the present act before any change was thought of. He quoted from The Manitoba Free Press to show the effect of Government control—in this instance referred to as an hourly expenditure of \$855 on liquor.