

April 10

Beer and Wine Forces Split on Local Option As Ontario's Cure-All

**Home Smith, President of
Moderation League,
Takes Issue With
Heighington Resolution
as Introduced in Legis-
lature—Government
and Opposition Leaders
and Press All "in Con-
spiracy of Silence"**

"Take it from me, I never heard of this Heighington resolution until I saw the newspapers after its introduction, and while it may be taken as a somewhat belated and faltering step in the right direction, it is not in line with my own personal views, nor with those of the Moderation League," declared R. Home Smith, President of the league, commenting on the resolution introduced into the Legislature by Wilfred Heighington, M.P.P., advocating the sale of wine and beer. Mr. Smith emphatically voiced his disagreement with the wording of the resolution as it stands.

"Again and again I have reiterated my own personal conviction on the general form of wine and beer legislation," he said, "and I would quote you the following from a speech I made at St. Catharines some six months ago:

"We desire light wines and beer by the bottle, to be sold under license, and subject to local option, in licensed hotels, restaurants and clubs, and under such Government restrictions as may be in the public interest."

"There must be local option, as that

principle has been the very foundation stone of true temperance legislation during the past fifty years," continued Mr. Smith. "The problems of the City of Toronto are as different from those of North Timiskaming as the County of Brant, as are red, white and blue, and within reason and subject to proper general regulation and supervision, why should not each municipal unit have the right to decide what its people want and intend to have, and what regulations in the opinion of the authorities best suit the necessities of the local situation.

"It is high time that this subject be dealt with and settled by the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Liberal Opposition in the House, the Leader of the Liberal Opposition out of the House and Mr. Nixon. Each of them has dodged the issue and joined every first-class newspaper in the Province in a conspiracy of silence. Action should have been taken a year ago when Ontario had a choice, and when this Province stood to gain in tourist traffic as against the Eighteenth Amendment conditions then prevailing in the United States. Today we have no choice, for 125,000,000 people to the south of the line have gone wet, and all our neighboring Provinces are practically on the Quebec liquor law, and therefore the bone-drys of this Province are thrown back on the absurd suggestion that we should constitute ourselves a small Sahara in the midst of a continent flowing with milk and honey.

"If any local bone-dry is still Sahara-minded, he must take one of two positions: Either, first, that the other 130,000,000 people on this continent are all wrong and that this Province of 3,000,000 people is alone righteous on wine and beer; or, second, that the population of this Province is so inferior in moral stamina to the rest of the people on the continent that our legislators must continue as nursemaids and provide a general law whereby the drinking habits and morals of the people of Ontario are protected by the superior wisdom of the 112 statesmen at Queen's Park.

"To all intents and purposes I opened this wine and beer campaign in a speech in March, 1932, and the concluding words were: 'If eventually, why not now?' Surely we have now arrived at 'eventually.' Let us get on with it."