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To Undecided Members of Every Church

Why halt or hesitate which side to take?

Would you abet the wrong and right forsake?

Think of your influence, what men would say

If you should fail to vote just as you pray!

Oh, ponder well the case, and count the cost

If through your voting wrong souls should be lost!

Now is the time to prove whom you will serve;

Go, boldly go, declare for God, nor swerve!

No power can wrest from you the mind and will

To act consistently, your vows fulfill. No tongue could nobly plead in your defence

If proving recreant you stride the fence.

Christ from His Church expects no compromise

With that which woe entails beneath His skies;

Who from the temple drove those who for gain

Basely defiled its courts with all their train.

What would the Master say if He were here—

If on the voting day He should appear As Scrutinizer of those who wield the pen

In favor of a trade to slaughter men?

Old eyes are watching you—children's as well;

They know what you should do, your duty tell;

Will gaze in wonder if you vote to shield

A traffic which can only sorrow yield.

For as "a city set upon a hill"

Cannot be hid from sight strive as you will.

So men the Christians judge by what they do—

Well do they know the sham from what is true.

The church the balance holds of power to-day

To crush the traffic in its cruel sway;

In her is vested strength to lead the van

To purge from earth the greatest foe to man.

"Get right with God," and you will be guided by;

Will set that day as for eternity. Nor will delusions captivate your mind.

Be true, and Godly satisfaction find.

—P. L. GRANT.

Richmond Hill, Jan. 29, 1906.

How many electors in Richmond Hill has the bar-room made rich? How many has it made poor?

Ratepayer's Third Letter.

To the Editor of THE LIBERAL:

I read, as no doubt most of our villagers did, the communication of Reader in your last week's issue. For myself I must say that I was somewhat disappointed with the reply to my letter of the week previous. "Reader" attempts to put aside the vital points of the local option debate by a series of interrogations. In a matter of such importance experimenting for a possible outcome is of too flippant a character merely to meet with the approval of the sober judgment of the community. The statement made in my former communication that local option had effected the closing of one bar in the village is impugned by the enquiry as to whether this was not brought about by the desire to secure a monopoly. The facts of the case are too patent to all to require reprinting. Equal monopoly surely existed previous to the closing of the Dominion Hotel bar as both could have been retained under the one ownership. That this was not done is confirmatory evidence that temperance sentiment in its best sense is making steady progress. "Reader" makes a highly problematical statement when he says: "There is little doubt that in our prosperous village a hotel can do a lucrative business without a bar." Taken in the sense in which it is no doubt intended, experience in the large majority of similar instances shows that this, however, is not the case. Read in its literal meaning, "Reader" confirms what has hitherto been charged and proven where local option has been tried, that a lucrative business is indeed done without the bar. The trouble has been to prevent the sale of liquor after the bar has been abolished. J. W. St. John, M.P.P., one of the strongest of temperance advocates stated recently that the local option by-law was exceedingly difficult in its operation. It is quite

understandable that our local option friends should conceive that their panacea for the drink habit is a success—but those who have had a wider experience with human nature recognize the fallacy of the claim. Where hotels have been kept going after local option has gone into effect, nothing but social estrangements caused by the necessity of a spy system has been brought into effect. We need to go no farther than the suburbs of Toronto to see the result of local option, and in these instances it must be remembered that the necessity for conniving at an illicit liquor traffic is lessened by the nearness of licensed hotels. What then would be expected where hotel privileges are unavailable for miles, as would be the case with us should we adopt local option. Coercion is strongly resented, and it is this which brings contempt for a law which is not regarded as having a status in the moral code.

We are by no means certain that our present hotel accommodation will be kept up if the license is discontinued. In what position would the village be placed with this as an eventuality, and would the local option advocates supply the deficiency? One important point to remember is that the measure, if carried, is irrevocable except after a lapse of three years.

We have been wisely told to honor all men. A good exercise of this practice will be found in extending to those whose views and purposes we oppose, simple, even-handed justice. Confiscation without compensation of one portion of the community of the rights and property of another portion could not fairly be considered an act of single handed justice. It was not in this way that the British Government in a less civilized and christianized age purchased the freedom of the slave. And yet local option defies this broad principle. Let us not belittle ourselves by endorsing a measure of this kind, although it has received the imprint of government legislation.

RATEPAYER.

The alignment of forces in a local option campaign ought itself to make it easy to convince right thinking citizens which side to support.

Close the Bar.

To the Editor of THE LIBERAL:

SIR,—I see by your issue of Feb. 1, that "Ratepayer" still continues to harangue your readers in the same strain as in his previous letters. He has even become more emphatic. He now dares to threaten the electors by endeavoring to impress them with his idea that Richmond Hill is defendant for its prosperity, and ultimate growth upon the granting of a liquor license within its bounds. "Take away the license," he says, "and you stop the growth of the village."

Is he not becoming ridiculous? Richmond Hill does not need a liquor license to increase its growth; Richmond Hill shall be in a state of prosperity when liquor has ceased to be made. Why not? Is it not properly situated for becoming the center of the grain trade for this district? Hence the building of the elevator which he predicts. The accommodation will be provided for the farmers, if not by our license holder, by others who can already see the profit to be made by running a hotel without a bar. Can any sensible person believe that where a bar-room has been closed by a majority of the votes of the electors, who, seeing the evils that arise through drink, a proprietor will close his house, will sacrifice for personal spite the gain that is to be made by providing accommodation to the public simply because he cannot continue to serve his poisonous stimulants.

This has been done in the past but the Ratepayer knows quite well that this does not last for long. The proprietor soon sees the folly of his action, he soon recognizes the fact that if he does not provide the accommodation it will be provided by others when it is required. This will be the case in our village. Already steps have been taken for this end by the formation of the Richmond Hill Boarding House Association.

"Ratepayer" should also be careful of the feelings of others when, because he differs from them on moral questions, not to use such harsh terms as fanatics which he has made use of in both his letters. These as he calls them have the welfare of the town at heart as much, if not a great deal more, than he has. They also have the welfare of humanity at heart, for which I would think he has not the slightest consideration.

These "fanatics" do not want local option for the sake of being known as a local option municipality; they are working to reduce, to crush out of existence, to exterminate a business that has been the great, growing curse of mankind for years past; a curse that

has been the ruin of many of our most promising youths, a curse that has brought sorrow to innumerable homes, a curse that has left bowed, aged and sorrowing fathers and mothers, destitute wives and families. Is this not a noble, grand and glorious institution to work for? What nobler object can man have than to exert himself for the benefit of his fellow men. I know too well that such a small reason as "Ratepayer" has been trying to put before your readers would carry but little weight with them. Your readers are too intelligent to be driven by threats. They know full well the ruin caused by the liquor trade and I am perfectly satisfied that they will show "Ratepayer" on the 19th that by polling a large majority of votes for local option, they have decided to remove the bar and the treating system from alluring more of our fellow-beings to further destruction.

I thank you, sir, for your valuable space, and appreciate the opening of your columns for the discussion of this question.

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