



# If the Hotel Goes—What Then?

The only positive side that Local Option possesses is that it extinguishes the licenses to sell alcoholic liquors. In all other respects it is negative. It takes no cognizance of the existence of hotels after the licenses of these have been withdrawn, nor does it even take into account the providing of a substitute for the licensed bar. A propaganda so one-sided in character carries in itself its own failure.

Take, for example, the matter of the licensed bar. If Local Option had the support of all the people, it is only reasonable to suppose that the closing of the licensed bar would mean a complete cessation of the demand for the liquors sold in the bar. Is this the case in actual practice? Very far from it. Local Option altogether ignores the natural desire of mankind for a certain extent of relaxation and enjoyment. The bar supplies such a desire in the case of many people. This is entirely a matter of history. Whether it is right or wrong is quite a different matter. Deprived of the facilities of obtaining that which they were accustomed to procure in a legitimate manner before, and being still possessed of a desire which Local Option has left untouched, people resort to illicit sources of supply, or keep a supply of liquor in their own houses, in order to gratify a desire which has been made, not morally wrong, but unlawful by reason of a measure of coercion promoted by people who delight in running contrary to world-old human nature.

If Local Option is a measure which has the goodwill of the whole body of the people, and is growing in favor, how does it come to pass that drunkenness is increasing, that illicit liquor convictions are increasing and excesses of all kinds are growing in volume all the time? Why also should it be necessary to impose more severe penalties and call for a more rigorous enforcement of the Local Option laws if this form of prohibition has the support of the people? In view of all the circumstances, on what grounds do the oracles of the Dominion Alliance assert that the whole province is ripe for prohibition?

There can be no doubt that the one-sidedness of Local Option is responsible to a very large extent for its failure. The advocates of Local Option seem to think that when the by-law has been carried their work is done. A new order of things to take the place of that which they have removed apparently never enters into their minds. As a matter of fact the carrying of a Local Option by-law is only the beginning of a changed era which should be handled with care. Instead of showing improved conditions the longer it is in force, Local Option is steadily going from bad to worse. Not a single promise made by the advocates of Local Option as to what it would do for Ontario has been kept, and yet, with amazing effrontery, its promoters—after having condemned it earlier in the present year—are again essaying to thrust a further instalment of their discredited measure upon the people of the province.

What is the constructive policy of the promoters of Local Option, or have they such a policy? What are they to do in the matter of hotel accommodation, and how do they propose to fill the void caused by the withdrawal of the

licensed bar? It is entirely fair that the promoters of Local Option should be called upon to declare where they stand in relation to these important matters. They propose to interfere with an existing situation. Is interference the whole sum and substance of their propaganda? People will wait for a reply with no little interest.

The fact that excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquors in the so-called "dry" districts of Ontario is increasing shows that the people in these are establishing their own substitutes for the licensed bars. There is a marked contrast between legitimate and illegitimate sources of liquor supply. The former are regulated by Statute and are under the constant supervision of the authorities. In the illicit sources of supply closing hours are unknown, there is no protection for young persons, the character of the liquor supplied is detrimental, physically and mentally, and the whole surroundings and methods of such resorts are demoralizing in the extreme. Can a measure which not only permits, but by its complete ignoring of anything in the nature of substitutes, actually fosters the multiplying of such resorts, be called a measure of reform? Is a measure of this kind worthy the support of men and women who are genuinely desirous of helping to uplift humanity? What is the use of being able to recite long lists of licenses abolished and dilate upon the changed appearance of the map of Ontario when, in reality, that is all which has been accomplished. Put alongside these Local Option gains the underground corruption which neither the promoters of Local Option nor their measure can do anything to cope with. The front of the picture may be fair to look at, but the back is being eaten into and bids fair to mar the whole picture before very long.

Local Option as exhibited in Ontario is a hollow mockery. In pushing it still further in the face of existing circumstances, the advocates of the measure do not rate the intelligence of the voters of Ontario very highly. It requires a colossal assurance to push forward a measure, disparaged by its promoters when it suits their purpose, and discredited in actual operation. Let the promoters of Local Option endeavor to explain their inconsistency and, at the same time, they might enlighten people why it is that after eight years' experience of their measure it is still as one-sided as ever. They might also say how they reconcile the actual results of Local Option with their previous promises and why matters are growing worse instead of better? It is not clap-trap sentiment or vague platitudes that are wanted but plain, prosaic matter-of-fact statements.

**MARK YOUR BALLOT THUS:**



**For LOCAL OPTION**

**Against LOCAL OPTION X**