

Transcribed

Not Prohibition

The Scott Act Was a Failure

The Liquor Act Would be Another Failure

Direct testimony goes to show that drunkenness instead of decreasing, increased under the Scott Act—Exactly the same state of affairs would follow the passage of the Liquor Act.

During the discussion in the Legislature last Session, on the Liquor Bill, Premier Ross said that the Scott Act had been a failure. He remarked:—

"The Scott Act was carried in twenty-six counties and in two cities, and it was repealed in all. It was carried by majorities aggregating 151,000 in round numbers, and repealed by majorities aggregating the same amount, so that there was a very decided change in public opinion. Now, the Scott Act is not to be under-estimated nor discredited as a temperance factor, yet it is very disappointing to find it cast aside in every instance where it was adopted. The effect of the Scott Act was educational, and it may have done a great deal of good, but as an efficient means for repressing the liquor traffic or arming the officers of the law with the power which it was supposed to afford them, **the Scott Act has been discredited, has been found ineffective, and has not, excepting in an educational sense, done any particular good.**"

WOULD CREATE PRIVATE CANTEENS.

Mr. J. P. Whitney holds similar views and in the course of a debate in the House on the Liquor Bill said:—

"Now, as to the Bill itself and apart from the referendum. As the 'Christian Guardian' said, it was not prohibition. We cannot have prohibition in a province. Let that fact sink into our inner consciousness. What they would have would be what he had described in the opening of his address, what had been described by the Premier, the promoter of the Bill. Mr. Ross had said: 'What we propose to ask is not, "Shall we prohibit the retail sale of intoxicating liquor? The saloons are bad enough, God knows, but not so bad as the canteen in the private home."' In spite of this the Bill was one which would result in men carrying the demijohn home. **It was the Scott Act over again.** Mr. Whitney then detailed how, when the Scott Act was first introduced into Ontario, he felt that the evil of excessive use of liquor was such that it was worth while making an experiment to lessen it, and he had voted for the Act; but when the Act came up again he, with thousands of others who had been convinced against their wills that it was a failure, went to the polls and voted honestly and openly against it. He believed that the evils which the Premier had pictured **would be present under this Bill.**"

FAILED IN ITS PURPOSE.

If the Scott Act failed to accomplish its purpose just as surely will the Liquor Act do the same. The Scott Act had the effect of arresting the progress of temperance—so would the Liquor Act. The Scott Act instead of diminishing, increased greatly the general amount of drunkenness, especially in towns and villages and the Liquor Act would do precisely the same. All the Counties in Ontario which passed the Scott Act and subsequently repealed it, speak with no uncertain tone. Direct testimony from business and professional men, from municipal bodies and from corporation officers in the counties affected show that under prohibition drunkenness instead of being diminished

was increased; that for every licensed tavern two unlicensed dens sprang into existence; that the trade was taken out of the hands of respectable hotels and given over to low dives, where the most pernicious drinks were vended on all days of the week and at all hours of the day; that spies, informers, perjurers, blackmailers abounded and that the moral tone of society was lowered.

If sobriety followed in the wake of prohibition, every honest man would be prepared to make large sacrifices. But all the evidence adduced shows the contrary to be the fact.

This was the effect of the Scott Act and it would be the same in the case of the Liquor Act.

TEMPERANCE PEOPLE AGAINST IT.

The evidence of the failure of the Scott Act is so conclusive that the measure now finds scarcely more favor with the temperance people than the old discarded Dunkin Act. The Scott Act was carried by the temperance element actuated perhaps by a praiseworthy energy but the large majority of voters believed, apparently, that the decision meant nothing to them and that no possible legislation would deprive them of their customary beverages. It is to be hoped that when the vote on the Liquor Act is taken on December 4th next, that similar apathy will not prevail. For or against, the voice of the people ought to be heard. The matter is one of vital importance and the verdict of the people, in the light of past experiences, ought to be decidedly against the Liquor Act.

The same agitators who are now trying to rush the Liquor Act through made the same promises when they were seeking to have the Scott Act carried. The people of the Province know now full well what those promises amounted to. The cry was raised from one end of the Province to the other that the Scott Act was the remedy for all the evils of the liquor traffic, but subsequent events proved that it was the contrary, and the cause of temperance received a serious set-back when it was adopted. There have been too many experiments made

already with this matter and they have not only failed but they have done harm and have cost immense amounts of money. It is far better to leave well enough alone. We cannot remove the craving for alcoholic stimulants by Act of Parliament, and while that craving continues there will be found legions of men daring and speculative who will meet the demand. People under prohibition will still drink. There will simply be a change from a licensed and regulated to an unlicensed and unregulated system.

The Scott Act failed after doing inestimable harm and so will the Liquor Act.—Therefore vote against the Liquor Act on December 4th.

