

## “To the Interests and Conscience of the Great Mass of the Community:” The Evolution of Temperance Societies in Nineteenth-Century Central Canada

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### Résumé de l'article

Considérées comme une force culturelle dans le Canada central, les sociétés de tempérance du XIXe siècle surent faire preuve de souplesse en s'ajustant aux fluctuations des tendances sociales et en recourant adroitement à diverses stratégies pour mener à bien leur guerre contre le trafic d'alcool. Toutefois, l'approbation générale que recueillaient ces organisations auprès de l'ensemble de la collectivité masquait en fait les querelles intestines qui divisaient le mouvement antialcoolique. Les sociétés de tempérance d'avant la Confédération bénéficiaient largement du soutien de la classe moyenne évangélique et du milieu des travailleurs qualifiés, quoiqu'elles aient sapé la confiance de ces derniers après avoir mis fin au programme de secours mutuel. Secouées par les agitations sectaires et politiques, les associations de tempérance perdirent clairement de leur pertinence au milieu du siècle. Elles regagnèrent une influence de plus en plus importante au cours des deux dernières décennies du XIXe siècle ; mais là aussi, des divergences d'opinion entre prohibitionnistes ruraux et urbains au sujet de la réglementation de la prohibition débouchèrent sur d'autres dissensions et désaccords sur la finalité du mouvement antialcoolique. L'apparente largeur d'esprit dont firent preuve les sociétés de tempérance à la fin du XIXe siècle fut encore une fois qualifiée de discours creux ; incapable d'unir ses forces, le mouvement prohibitionniste n'eut plus l'élan nécessaire pour renverser l'obstacle politique qu'était devenu le spectre de la prohibition.

## **“To the Interests and Conscience of the Great Mass of the Community:” The Evolution of Temperance Societies in Nineteenth-Century Central Canada**

**DARREN FERRY**

Temperance as a moral, political and social issue has often overshadowed the temperance society itself as a harbinger of cultural change, yet these organizations experienced remarkable resiliency in central Canada throughout the nineteenth century. Temperance societies not only offered the larger community membership in a seemingly inclusive organization of like-minded individuals, but they also adapted exceedingly well to the changing circumstances surrounding the war on the liquor traffic. As a result, the ideology of temperance supporters could evolve from a vision of moderation in the consumption of alcohol in the early 1800s to teetotalism by mid-century, and then to complete prohibition by the latter decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Even though the longevity of the temperance movement rested on an appeal that crossed gender and class lines, conflicts over just how to fulfil the objective of a dry Canada unmasked the exclusive nature of these societies. While pre-Confederation temperance societies and temperance fraternal orders liberally

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- 1 For the evolution of temperance from moderation to prohibition in the United States, see Ian Tyrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, 1979); Jack Blocker, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform*, (Boston, 1989); and Thomas Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933* (Chicago, 1998). In Britain, see the classic by Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London, 1971); and Lillian Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England*, (New York, 1988). For the Canadian context, see James Clemens, “Taste Not, Touch Not, Handle Not: A Study of the Social Assumptions of the Temperance Literature and Supporters in Canada West, 1839-59,” *Ontario History*, 64 (1972), 142-60; Ernest Dick, “From Temperance to Prohibition in Nineteenth Century Nova Scotia,” *Dalhousie Review*, 61, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), 530-52; Janet Noel, *Canada Dry: Temperance Crusades Before Confederation*, (Toronto, 1995); and Andrew Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle Class Formation in Victorian Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston, 2000), 130-50.

recruited women and the working classes to fill their ranks, sectarian and political turmoil from within soon exposed the fissures amongst the temperance “community.” By the end of the Victorian era, in the more urbanized areas of central Canada temperance came under the influence of the alliance movement, a succession of temperance unions and leagues united in their attempts to find a legalized solution to the liquor problem. Culminating in the creation of the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic in 1877, the Alliance represented one of the more successful organizations in centralizing temperance efforts throughout central Canada. And yet by focusing all their labour on accomplishing political prohibition, urban temperance and prohibition advocates tended towards exclusivity and the entanglements of political controversy, while rural temperance supporters of all classes continued to rely on the merits of the temperance fraternal order. The differences between the two approaches in the campaign against alcohol would reflect competing visions of temperance held by rural and urban inhabitants.

From the earliest temperance societies in the 1820s to the growth of temperance fraternal orders at mid-century, initial temperance ideology centred largely on individual efforts to rescue drunkards. These temperance pledge societies focused on the question of temperance as a simple matter of moral agency, and applied “moral suasion” in their attempt to reclaim the inebriate into the natural order of the community. Coinciding with other middle-class ideologies such as evangelicalism, the rationale behind the outpouring of temperance sentiment in the first half of the nineteenth century has often been explained as the desire of the early bourgeoisie to impose capitalistic discipline, social order, and a hegemonic respectability upon a working class that was difficult to control. Conversely, temperance also became a vehicle for master artisans, the lower-middle class, and a burgeoning labour force to express their dissatisfaction with a backwoods commercial aristocracy.<sup>2</sup> As a result, reconcil-

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2 That early temperance was led by an evangelical commercial aristocracy bent on social control and creating a capitalistic hegemony see Tyrell, *Sobering Up*, 34-70; and Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana and Chicago, 1984), 32-62. For Britain, see Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 25-30, 115-78 and for Canada, see Dick, “From Temperance to Prohibition,” 530-5. Other historians have argued that the labour aristocracy and master artisans in the early half of the nineteenth century led temperance societies. See W.R. Lambert, *Drink and Society in Victorian Wales, 1820-1895* (Cardiff, 1983), 32-40 and 87-113; as well as, Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty*, 130-7. A more recent and compelling argument is that both the commercial bourgeoisie and the working classes used temperance in different periods of time towards their own ends. See Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink*, 15-40; Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 3-60; and Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum*, 25-41. In Canada, see Clemens, “Taste Not, Touch Not, Handle Not,” 142-60; F.L. Barron, “Damned Cold Water Drinking Societies: Oligarchic Opposition to the Temperance Movement in Upper Canada,” *Upper Midwest History*, 4 (1984), 11-28; and Noel, *Canada Dry*, 105-46.

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ing these various classes and interests into a harmonious and united temperance community became a precarious balancing act for early nineteenth-century temperance societies.

The earliest temperance societies envisioned that their organizations would house an all-encompassing membership composed of all those who were willing to abide by the temperance pledge. One of the first temperance societies formed in Canada was the Montreal Temperance society, an organization that ran the *Canada Temperance Advocate* from 1835 to 1849. Noting that the vice of intemperance was highly detrimental to every class in the community, the *Advocate* called on everyone, “whatever may be his opinions, prejudices, profession, occupation or pursuit; whether he be religious or irreligious, temperate or intemperate, old or young, rich or poor” to awaken to the danger of alcohol. Whatever the nationality, colour, creed, or character of the potential candidate, the Montreal Temperance Society would welcome that member with open arms to the ranks of its temperance army. In Upper Canada, the Toronto Temperance Reformation Society similarly declared that membership in the Society required only the signing of the pledge, without distinction of sex, religious creed, political party, or condition of life. As a result, the Toronto Temperance Society proudly proclaimed that men of all occupations, classes, ranks, and orders of the community were to be found in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

In their attempts to develop into a comprehensive force in the larger community, temperance societies heavily conscripted women to endorse the temperance ideal. Much of the debate surrounding women’s participation in temperance societies by mid-century centres around the notion of domesticity and how temperance issues allowed women access to the public sphere. Indeed, many scholars conclude that female involvement in temperance even at this early stage framed the early impetus for women’s rights.<sup>4</sup> Pre-fraternal temperance societies not only welcomed women as full members in their association, but they also encouraged their petitions for membership at every opportunity. In a report of a Ladies Soiree of the Montreal Temperance Society, directors contrasted their dinner with similar public functions, where “the ladies were kept away, they must be domestic ... we propose another plan; we want the ladies with us; we count them as stars to ray out on the gloom of the world.”

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3 See the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 November 1836, 49-50; 15 May 1843, 23; and 15 May 1851, 157; as well as, the *Eighth Report of the Toronto Temperance Reformation Society*, (Toronto, 1847), v and 8.

4 More recent historiography focuses more on the emergence of women in the public sphere as a result of temperance agitation, despite a rather public vision of domesticity; see *Blocker, American Temperance Movements* 61-94; Noel, *Dry Canada* 89-102; Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth Century United States* (New Haven and London, 1990); and Carol Mattingly, *Well Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (Carbondale, 1998).

Unfortunately, despite an increased attentiveness to women members in early temperance societies, in many respects the work of female temperance supporters remained solely as figureheads and spectators.<sup>5</sup> The accessibility of early pledge temperance societies to the entire community would often be exposed as empty rhetoric, particularly in the realms of politics and religion.

The connection of temperance societies with evangelical Protestant religion would produce more sectarianism, and increasing calls for the endorsement of legal sanctions to alcohol would lead to more political discord than other voluntary associations. On the surface, temperance societies believed that the elimination of religious and political disputes were paramount in creating harmony within the temperance community. Objectivity over political and sectarian issues likewise became a creed for the country's leading temperance paper, the *Canada Temperance Advocate*. In an article entitled "The Temperance Movement is Unsectarian," temperance supporters extolled the virtues of a movement that united men of all religious persuasions in a common cause.<sup>6</sup> The veil over sectarian concord within the temperance movement was exceedingly thin, and the neutral ground over which it stood became increasingly contested. Reverend Joseph Abbott, an Anglican minister in Montreal, bemoaned the fact that "innovation and Heresy in Religion" was starting to establish a strong foothold in the community of believers. Abbott also likened the good Christian men of the temperance movement to comparable men such as Wesley and Watts who erred on points of vital importance to the established Church of England.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, at the inaugural meeting of the Kemptville Temperance Society in 1830, the right Rev. Patton called on all men without distinction of party or sect to aid in the common cause of temperance. As a High Churchman, Patton visualized the temperance movement being led by the

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5 See *The Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 August 1843, 104-5 and 16 October 1847, 314-5. See also the *Eighth Report of the Toronto Temperance Reformation Society* (Toronto, 1847), 18; Cecilia Morgan, *Public Men and Virtuous Women: The Gendered Languages of Religion and Politics in Upper Canada, 1791-1850* (Toronto, 1996), 208-18; and *Dry Canada* Noel, 89-102.

6 Unfortunately, parallel sectarian difficulties quickly arose in the Montreal Temperance Society; see Noel, *Dry Canada*, 64-88. See the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 October 1835, 43; 1 January 1836, 65; 1 February 1841, 86 and 15 May 1851, 57. Although this study focuses on Protestant Christianity, Catholics in Quebec also joined in the temperance crusade; see Jan Noel. "Dry Patriotism: The Chiniquy Crusade," in Cheryl Warsh, ed., *Drinking in Canada: Historical Essays* (Montreal and Kingston, 1993), 27-42.

7 The Rev. Joseph Abbott was a High Churchman who held a virulent hatred for dissenters; see his *Strictures on the Remarks of the Rev. J Reid in his Pamphlet in Favour of the Temperance Society*, (Montreal, 1836), 3 and 25, as well as his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9 (Toronto, 1976), 3-4. For the connection of temperance with evangelical religion in this period, see Clemens, 144-50; Acheson, *Saint John*, 138-45; and Noel, *Canada Dry*, 80-89 and 110-21.

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institutional Church of England, and therefore this discourse was naturally couched in the language of sectarianism.<sup>8</sup>

While impartiality in politics was a mandate of the Montreal Temperance Society, oblique political statements offered in the *Canada Temperance Advocate* testify to the difficulty for temperance supporters in strictly adhering to political objectivity. During the rebellions in Lower Canada, the editors of the *Advocate* equated the rising political passions of the people with mounting intemperance in the countryside. Evidently, the more “evil and turbulent” individuals in the community were highly attracted to the public house, as supporters of the rebellion offered free liquor for those attending seditious meetings.<sup>9</sup> As temperance increasingly became an issue for the differing political parties, the *Advocate* warned supporters “no great moral cause has ever yet been able to withstand party spirit, that political maelstrom which engulfs all that come within its reach. The Temperance cause, in the violent commotions of the two great political parties, had well nigh been swallowed up, and that too, by the party zeal of its friends – and had it been any other than the temperance cause, we should despair of a resuscitation.” Even when the *Advocate* delved into political matters in their displeasure over the election of John Molson – the city’s most notorious brewer – the paper pleaded self-defence in thrusting temperance principles into politics. To the editors of the *Advocate*, the Molson election episode illustrated that politics also could be rudely pushed against temperance principles.<sup>10</sup>

Temperance societies also vigorously preached to their members the gospel of honest industry and the political economy of individual labour. Early pledge temperance societies focused on how loafers and spendthrifts contributed nothing to the community, while those who laboured for their own support became the society’s foundations. Temperance groups also accepted the labour theory of value, as “labour levels all distinctions, and gives the poor man an inheritance in this world, more certain, though not so extensive as the rich, in his own talents, faculties and capacities. By making all welfare and acquisition depend on labour, all mankind is provided for, and monopolies, in effect, done away.” Temperance societies blamed the curse of idleness on the blight of intemperance, as the inebriated labourer often halted the spread of honest industry. Taking the analogy one step further, the Montreal Temperance

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8 Despite his enthusiasm for increased participation by the laity, Patton believed in voluntarism from like-minded Church of England men, not other Protestant dissenters. See his *Address Delivered in the Village of Kemptville*, 11-3; and Curtis Fahey, *In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Ottawa, 1991), 183, 243-7, and 273-4.

9 See the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 December 1837, 70-71; 1 January 1838, 78; 1 February 1838, 86-7; and 1 December 1838, 60-1.

10 On the election of Molson in Montreal, see *Ibid.*, 1 March 1844, 71; 15 March 1844, 88; and 1 April 1844, 106.

Society produced “evidence” that concluded beyond doubt that the majority of inhabitants in the Montreal House of Industry were suffering from the adverse effects of alcohol. Statistics produced by the society illustrated that hundreds of families were living in a liquor-induced condition where industry, respectability, and morality was simply impossible.<sup>11</sup> Temperance supporters also utilized the increasingly significant science of political economy to justify their opposition to the liquor traffic. The alcohol trade itself was an aberration to normal laws of political economy and a hindrance to national prosperity, as it wasted financial reserves and other resources, and killed the labour incentive. Viewing the public as an aggregate body, temperance social economy included the development of industry, the proper rewards of labour, the diffusion of property, and measures integral to the protection of society against those evils – such as the liquor traffic – that were bent on destroying the peace and prosperity of a nation.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1840s, in the eyes of many temperance supporters, the pledge societies had lost their effectiveness in encouraging temperance within central Canadian society. Working-class temperance supporters in particular stressed the need for an enhanced moral assault on the liquor traffic. Coupled with an appreciation for mutual-benefit fraternalism they joined with enthusiasm new temperance orders from the United States such as the Sons of Temperance and the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT). The most popular temperance fraternal lodges were those of the Sons of Temperance, an organization that entered Canada in 1848. Intent on reclaiming the drunkard through the doctrines of self-help and self-improvement as well as providing alternate social events to the public house, the Sons recruited heavily from the ranks of the working class. Although temperance fraternalism was theoretically open to all classes, the extension of mutual benefits in these organizations ensured a large constituency from the working classes engaged on expanding their own vision of respectability.<sup>13</sup>

11 See *Ibid.*, 15 July 1842, 96; 1 January 1843, 271; 2 August, 1847, 238; and 1 June 1849, 166. See also *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of Lower Canada on the Use of Ardent Spirits*, 6-7; and *Facts and Figures for the People* (Toronto, 1864), 4-5.

12 Much of this sentiment echoed the ideology of the early producer alliance in Victorian Canada, whereby the “non-producing” and entrenched privileged mercantile elites of the early nineteenth-century were viewed as being outside the community of independent yeomen, artisans and manufacturers. See L.R. MacDonald, “Merchants Against Industry: An Idea and its Origins,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 56 (1975), 266-80; Acheson, *Saint John*, and Elsbeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto, 1999), 21-7. See also the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 July 1843, 71-2; 15 January 1845, 24-5; 16 November 1845, 344; and 15 November 1852, 348-9.

13 See Dannenbaum, 41-56; Blocker, *American Temperance Movements* 45-57; and Acheson, *Saint John*, 148-54. Jan Noel argues that the Sons of Temperance formed a radical working-class subculture in Canada West, formulating their own concepts of respectability; see *Dry Canada*, 105-19 and 141-50.



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Nonetheless, both the Sons of Temperance and the Good Templars attempted to construct interclass unity within the bonds of temperance fraternalism. To the Sons' executive board, temperance fraternal orders would produce a levelling effect on the larger community. In the Sons of Temperance division room all stations, ranks and classes ceased to exist, as the "high born" elite stood on the same level as the "base born peasant."<sup>14</sup> By the early 1860s, the competition for lodge or division members became fairly strong, and thus accessibility of temperance fraternal orders to all members of the community was a key selling point. To the Good Templars, the lodge represented the family unit on a much more extended scale, united in their efforts to promote the welfare of society. Lodges of the IOGT therefore included all "grades and conditions of society – the minister of the gospel, the cultivated man of letters, educated and refined ladies, mingling as equals with the weather bronzed tiller of the soil, the toiling mechanic, the working girl and the bashful apprentice."<sup>15</sup> Thus temperance societies called on the legislators of the land to put a halt to the liquor traffic as a threat to the public welfare, and to wage war against the private interests of alcohol dealers. Likening society to a body, each member of the community was essential to its welfare and protection, except for "the man who attempts to fasten himself upon the community, and who, through indolence or some other cause, refuses to contribute something to the common stock." That man of course was the rumseller, who contributed nothing to society and deserved no protection in return.<sup>16</sup>

Nowhere was the inclusive/exclusive paradigm of temperance societies more in evidence than temperance fraternalism's recruitment and treatment of women members. When the Grand Division of Canada West agreed "generally" with the principle of allowing women as full voting members in 1856, debates in the Orono division of the Sons of Temperance over the issue began a scant month later. Noting that women had a tendency to awaken sociality within a division, directors initially decided to simply highlight the elimination of initia-

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14 See the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 22 April 1851, 74; 12 August 1851, 195 and 26 August 1851, 214.

15 See the *Good Templar*, 6 January 1863 and 10 February 1863. See also the *Ritual of the British American Order of Good Templars* (London, 1860), 13-4. Temperance societies therefore operated on a "familialist" model of society not unlike church congregations, where the local group acted as an extended family for members. See Nancy Christie's introduction, "Family, Community and the Rise of Liberal Society" in her edited collection *Households of Faith: Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969* (Montreal and Kingston, 2002), 3-20; and Lynne Marks, "Railing, Tattling and General Rumour: Gossip, Gender and Church Regulation in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 3 (September 2000), 380-402.

16 See the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 15 July 1842, 88 and 1 June 1854, 172. See also the *Proceedings of the Grand Division Sons of Temperance, Canada West*, Semi-annual session (May 1852), 44 and Semi-annual session (May 1854), 10.



tion fees for lady visitors. When the directors of the Orono division reinforced their ban on female members, a disgruntled Brother held a “conversation with a lady who thought about joining the division [and said] that he could not conscientiously recommend a lady to join the Sons.” The issue of female membership continued to arise in Orono, but it was not until 1870 that women were allowed to become full members in the Orono Sons of Temperance. When directors contrasted the state of the Sons to that of the Good Templars in a retrospective of the order printed at mid-century, they attributed the success of the former to the admission of women as full members while the Sons had excluded them.<sup>17</sup> The Independent Order of Good Templars thus understood the importance of women to the temperance movement, and made great strides in recruiting women to the cause. From its commencement, the IOGT not only allowed females to join in full fellowship, but they also permitted women to fill executive positions. In the fierce competition for members among the temperance fraternal orders, the IOGT would highlight the fact that their society was inclusive of women unlike the discriminatory policies of other fraternal temperance orders like the Sons.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, the political and sectarian tensions simmering under the issue of temperance became even more pronounced with temperance fraternal orders at mid-century, despite their proclamations of political and religious neutrality. While the Sons of Temperance were not a political or religious movement, they commanded their members to be more “individually active in the field of general usefulness” by becoming better citizens and Christians. The Independent Order of Good Templars held similar strictures against sectarianism and partyism, eliminating any interference with the political or religious preferences of any member. As one director of the IOGT supposed, “while we may differ in our opinions, let us bear and forbear with each other, suppressing all undue strife and contention – debating only to make our varied presentations acceptable, having in view, in all we do, the best interests of our noble fraternity.”<sup>19</sup> Notwithstanding such statements, establishing political and religious toleration would prove rather difficult for temperance fraternal orders.

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17 See the Orono Sons of Temperance fonds, Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), MU 2879, minute book #2, 1854-9, 6 January and 1 September 1858. See also Orono minute book #3, 1863-4, 23 September 1863. This is a great local example of the kind of debates at the Grand Division level about female membership; see the *Proceedings of the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance, Canada East*, Annual session (June 1864), 5; Annual session (June 1867), 14-15 and Annual session, (June 1868), 6 and 18.

18 See the *Proceedings of the Grand Temple*, IOGT, Annual meeting (April 1861), 12-13; *The Good Templar*, 6 January 1863 and 7 April 1863. See also the Ritual of the British American Order of Good Templars, 13-14.

19 *Proceedings of the Grand Temple*, IOGT, Semi-annual meeting (October 1860), 9; see also the *Good Templar*, 26 May 1863 and 28 July 1863, as well as the *Degree Book of the IOGT*, 6-7 and 15. See also the *Proceedings of the Grand Division Sons of Temperance, Canada East*, Annual session (July 1863), 5-6.

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While it is fairly difficult to determine many of the occupations of early members of temperance fraternalism, clearly a strong skilled working class component existed in these cross-class organizations. As a result, some measure of working class reformist dialogue did in fact creep in the ideology of temperance fraternal orders, a discourse that tended to censure the commercial aristocracy. A lecture by the noted Reformer and member of the International Order of Rechabites T.S. Brown focused exclusively on the drinking of the “*snobs* of society” and called on the temperance order to “let all our batteries of reproach, derision and exposure be directed against the liquor loaded tables of the rich, and the drinking usages of so-called fashionable society.” The Sons of Temperance liberally partook of working class radical culture, blaming a “SELFISH GENTEEL CLASS” for increased intemperance in the community. To the Sons, it was the respectable classes that proved to be the greatest stumbling block to temperance in Canada. If the working classes had a better example of moderation placed before them from the influential members of society, the use of alcohol in the community would be eradicated.<sup>20</sup>

No greater example of radical political temperance exists than in the personage of Charles Durand, the editor of the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*. A lawyer and supporter of the original Reform party of Mackenzie, suspicious of the Liberal/Tory alliance and no friend to the Clear Grits, Durand often used the supposedly neutral ground of his temperance newspaper to stir up political and religious controversy. Originally Durand echoed the sentiments of the Order in general, claiming that his paper would brook no religious or political controversies. Despite this veneer of non-sectarianism, Durand attacked the Clergy Reserve question with Reformer enthusiasm, as well as making rather unprovoked attacks on Catholics. In an article on the Know-Nothing party in the United States, Durand declared unequivocally that “we would say to all Roman Catholics, we hate not you but it is your system, your errors, your delusions ... give us the reign of the French Goddess of Reason, bad as it was, before the blackness of minds enslaved by Popish priestcraft.”<sup>21</sup> Durand further rationalized the political nature of his paper by observing that if there were not such a great disposition in the Canadian press to truckle to class interests, he would be less inclined to com-

20 T.S. Brown, *Speech of T.S. Brown at the Union Tent, International Order of Rechabites* (Montreal, 1848), 2-3. See also the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 13 May 1851, 90 and 5 July 1853, 212. The Orono Sons of Temperance fonds, AO, MU 2879, membership book, 1850-58 illustrates that nearly half (48.8%) of the membership of the Orono Sons from 1850-58 were skilled workers. Similarly, in the Ameliasburgh Division of the Sons of Temperance from 1850-54, nine yeomen, five carpenters, 2 blacksmiths, a tailor and a cooper became acting directors. See the records of the Ameliasburgh division, AO, MU 2085 #1, minute book, 1850-54, 1-2.

21 The *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 18 January 1853, 22; 7 January 1854, 5; 22 April 1854, 97; and 2 September 1854, 211-2.

ment upon political matters. Of course, Durand always qualified his attacks by saying that he respected an honest Tory as much as a Reformer; it was just the “double faced Tories, temperance and political trimmers” that he heartily detested. The predilection of Durand for Reform issues over temperance came to a head by 1855, when he announced that he would replace the *Canadian Son of Temperance* with a paper entitled *The Crisis*, which would be a emphatically a Reform paper, of a fearless independent kind.<sup>22</sup>

While the Good Templars avoided this kind of political controversy, in 1858 they became embroiled in a far more serious sectarian debate, which led to the creation of the British American Order of Good Templars (BAOT). When Rev. James Scott of London, Canada West objected to the removal of the Son and Holy Ghost from IOGT rituals to suit American Unitarians, he attempted to forge a National Temple independent from the United States. To Scott, such an organization would be bounded by no geographical distinctions, nor bow to any theological dogma.<sup>23</sup> The IOGT understandably held quite a different view of the whole affair, concerned that executive decisions on the order’s rituals were thoroughly misrepresented in the press. In the end, the Grand Temple wished the British American Templars well in their temperance crusade but denying membership in the IOGT to members of the British Order. However, when BOAT recruiter N.C. Gowan attempted to aggressively campaign in IOGT Temples the *Good Templar* went on the offensive. Answering the worn-out charge of disloyalty in following the creed of an American temperance order, the editors stated, “we do not boast of loyalty, we allow deeds to speak for themselves. Loyalty is something like religion, the genuine possessor of either of them boasts not of them. Show us a loudmouthed religionist and loyalist, and we will show you a hypocrite and a coward.” The discord between the two groups died out swiftly when the IOGT adopted the motion in 1865 to allow members of the British Order back into the Good Templar fold.<sup>24</sup>

The politicization of temperance became even more manifest in central Canada during the early 1850s, when the Maine Laws came into effect in the

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22 From July to August of 1853, Durand held a running battle with “traitors” to the reform cause such as William Macdougall and Malcolm Cameron, who Durand accused of selling out to Hincks for “a mess of patron pottage.” Macdougall responded in kind, reproving Durand for making the Sons too political, and therefore less popular with the masses. See the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 9 September 1851, 230; 6 May 1854, 108; 13 May 1854, 115; 26 July 1853, 235; 2 August 1853, 244; and the prospective of *The Crisis*, 13 Jan 1855.

23 See the *British American Order of Good Templars, The Documents, Reasons and Proceedings Connected with the Formation of Said Order* (London, 1858), 6-8, 10-14; *Ritual of the British American Order of Good Templars*, 10 and N.C. Gowan, *The Advantages of Membership in the Order of British Templars* (London, 186-), 4-5.

24 *Proceedings of the Grand Temple, IOGT*, Annual meeting (April 1860), 10-11, 27; and Semi-annual session (November 1865), 47-8; see also the *Good Templar*, 3 May 1864 and 17 May 1864.

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United States. Led by temperance crusader Neal Dow, these laws effectively fashioned the legalized prohibition of alcohol in Maine, which led to further laws against the liquor traffic in other American jurisdictions.<sup>25</sup> Convinced that moral suasion was no longer effective, central Canadian Sons of Temperance supporters called on the government to protect the community from the “immense pecuniary sacrifices, the mental and physical maladies, the outrages of life and property, and the moral contamination” of the liquor traffic. Underscoring the shift to temperance politics, the Most Worthy Patriarch of Canada West Sons of Temperance proclaimed:

Should it be urged that, in so doing [agitating for Prohibition] we would transcend our appropriate limits, and be interfering with politics, I answer that the subject of Temperance is one of vast political importance. I use the term “political” not in the narrow, contracted sense, which would bring the work of great moral reformation into the arena of party strife, or array a class of men, whose object is, or should be, to elevate their fellow men, and purify society, from a desolating and corrupting evil, into a political party, to strive with others for the loaves and fishes of office; but in that higher and nobler meaning in which politics is the science of government – a science which teaches to advance the general welfare and the aggrandizement of the whole community.<sup>26</sup>

The shift to political prohibition seems to be one of the subtle factors inherent in the removal of cross-class collaboration in temperance societies. Even the Reformer and Sons of Temperance enthusiast Durand noted that if temperance became a political question, the labouring classes needed to be included in the political process for prohibition. To Durand and other radical political temperance agitators, the natural desire of the working class for freedom and liberty would be offended by legal suasion.<sup>27</sup> However, working class withdrawal from mid-century central Canadian temperance societies would involve more than just the increasing political presence of temperance within the larger society.

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25 For the efficiency of the Maine Laws in enforcing prohibition in the United States, see Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 69-99; Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 70-9; and Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum*, 39-45.

26 See the *Proceedings of the Grand Division, Sons of Temperance, Canada East*, Annual session (June 1854), 8-10 and the *Proceedings of the Grand Division, Sons of Temperance, Canada West*, Semi-annual session (May 1852), 9 and 44; Semi-annual session (May 1853), 9-10 and Semi-annual session (May 1857), 3-4.

27 *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 6 December 1851, 357 and 15 November 1853, 360. See also *Proceedings of the Grand Division, Sons of Temperance, Canada West*, Semi-annual session (June 1861), 10-11. Many historians view the reallocation of interest to political prohibition as the mitigating factor in the removal of working class support from temperance; see Tyrell, *Sobering Up*, 230-40; Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 50-5; and Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty*, 140-50.

Temperance fraternal orders also grasped the concept of honest industry as an essential philosophy not only to national prosperity, but also to the success of the temperance enterprise. As many early members of the Sons of Temperance were also part of the skilled working class, much of the ideology inherent in their temperance publications emphasized the dignity of labour, the labour theory of value and also how “labouring men [were] the props and sinews of all communities.” Thus the liquor trade was anathema to the laws of political economy as it not only wasted national resources, it was also the enemy of respectability, the opponent of industry, and the adversary of every man’s prosperity.<sup>28</sup> Temperance fraternalism offered an appealing array of benefits for the temperate working man such as sickness insurance, funeral benefits, and a widows’ and orphans’ fund, all depending upon the continuing soberness of the applicant. Thus the expansion of the benefits system by fraternal temperance orders helped disseminate the gospel of honest industry through the doctrines of temperance, self-help, and mutual assistance.

The summation of the relationship between the mutual benefit system and honest industry appeared in an article by the Worthy Secretary of the Canada West Sons of Temperance, Durand. He stated unequivocally that “poverty cannot exist amongst us, for with us all must be sober, industrious and honest, and the really deserving – the sick, the orphan, the widows of our order – have hearts of love, upon which they can always depend.”<sup>29</sup> While the system of benefits maintained by the Sons of Temperance and other fraternal temperance orders fulfilled the mandate of the individual work ethic and mutual aid, the mid-nineteenth-century working classes found paying for mutual assurance to be far more difficult. Not only were lodges and divisions susceptible to over claiming on the benevolent funds, creative bookkeeping and outright embezzlement of division monies created periodic funding predicaments. Delegates to the 1853 annual meeting of the Sons of Temperance of Canada West held in Kingston recognized that the order had fallen inward through the introduction of the benefit system, as those interested only in pecuniary rewards left as quickly as they joined.<sup>30</sup>

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28 The Sons of Temperance also enforced an edict that each member needed to have a visible means of support; see the *Constitution of the National, Grand and Subordinate Divisions of the Sons of Temperance of North America* (Brockville, 1850), 20. See also the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 26 February 1851, 12-13 and 26 August 1851, 211-3, as well as *The Good Templar*, 3 November 1863 and 12 April 1864.

29 See the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 24 June 1851, 142 and *Constitution of the National, Grand and Subordinate Divisions of the Sons of Temperance*, 16, 21-3. See also Rev. W.T. Leach, *An Address on Rechristianism* (Montreal, 1845), 6-9 and the *Revised Constitution, General Laws and Bylaws of the Knights of Temperance*, (Quebec, 1854), 3-4.

30 See the *Proceedings of the Grand Division, Sons of Temperance, Canada West*, Annual session (October 1853), 6-7 and 16. For an example of a treasurer absconding with lodge or division funds, see the records of the Ameliasburgh Sons, AO, MU 2085 #1, minute book, 1850-54, 4 October 1851 to 21 February 1852.

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As a result of these funding crises, the Grand Division of the Canada West Sons of Temperance experimented with a measured withdrawal from the benefits system. During the 1854 semi-annual session it was suggested that poorer divisions discontinue mutual assurance, as their monies were "entirely exhausted by incessant drafts for benefits." When delegates floated the notion of equality between non-benefit and benefit members in 1856, it would come as no surprise that the Grand Worthy Secretary reported in the 1857 annual session that those divisions dropping the benefits were the most successful. This advantage did not stand the test of time, however, as the number of Sons of Temperance divisions in all of Canada went from a high of 400 in 1852 to less than 300 in 1862, and from 18,000 contributing members to less than 7,000.<sup>31</sup> It would seem to be no coincidence that the meteoric rise and fall of the Sons of Temperance in Canada coincided with the re-emergence of the Independent Order of Oddfellows over the same period of time. Many prominent Sons and their supporters viewed the Oddfellows, Masons and Orangemen as viable threats and competitors to their association. Noting that Oddfellowship cost nearly two to three times as much as membership in the Sons, Durand found it particularly galling that the Orange Order, based simply on the protection of Protestantism and consumed with vice and intemperance, claimed more adherents than either. Durand could not understand that if the Orange Order was "partly a political movement, why should not the Order of the Sons, which is not political, and has only the test of strict temperance superadded, succeed equally well? Does the fact of this last test injure it with the masses? It would really seem so, as society is now constituted."<sup>32</sup> While the advocacy of prohibition was somewhat culpable for the loss of working class support from temperance societies, it was the mismanagement and eventual removal of the benefits system – beloved and required by many skilled workers – which added to the waning of temperance sentiment among the mid-century working class.

After Confederation the tone of temperance societies changed dramatically, as they shifted their emphasis from the promotion of moral suasion to the totality of legalized prohibition. As a result, a large influx of lower middle-class and middle-class members decided to affiliate themselves with both rural

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31 *Proceedings of the Grand Division, Sons of Temperance, Canada West*, Annual session (October 1852), 19 and 53; Semi-annual session (May 1854), 11-2; Semi-annual session (May 1856), 6-7; Annual session (December 1857), 37-8; and Semi-annual session (June 1862), 12-3.

32 See the *Canadian Son of Temperance and Literary Gem*, 18 October 1853, 332 and the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 15 January 1850, 22. The International Order of Rechabites made similar comments about non-temperance fraternalism; see the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 May 1849, 132. For the rise of other mutual benefit societies in this period, see Bryan Palmer, "Mutuality and the Masking/Making of Difference: Mutual Benefit Societies in Canada, 1850-1950," in Marcel van der Linden, ed., *Social Security Mutualism: The Comparative History of Mutual Benefit Societies* (New York, 1996), 111-38.

and urban temperance associations. Historical explanations for an increased presence of middle-class temperance supporters range from the augmented presence of middle-class women in temperance societies to the desire of the commercial classes to impose capitalistic discipline through legal strictures on the sale and consumption of alcohol.<sup>33</sup> In order to centralize prohibition work from among the various churches and temperance societies, in 1877 urban activists established the Dominion Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic. Even as the prohibition movement achieved consensus among urban middle-class temperance advocates as the main solution to society's ills by the 1880s, the internal dynamics of urban prohibition created discord among the major players by the turn of the century. Conflicts between evangelicals and social gospellers, and disputes among social reformers, radicals and conservatives as well as political partisanship served to fracture the urban prohibition alliance.<sup>34</sup>

Although not overtly exclusive to the middle class, the prohibition union movement centred in urban central Canada became far more attuned to bourgeois sentiments than the traditional fraternal temperance order. Originating as early as the 1850s with the Canadian Prohibitory Liquor Law League, the union movement took on many forms until its most successful manifestation, the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic. Patterned after the United Kingdom Temperance Alliance in Great Britain, the development of temperance union associations came simply as a desire to amalgamate support for prohibition amongst a diverse group consisting of fraternal temperance orders, churches, and others willing to invest in so great a cause. Remaining autonomous voluntary associations, temperance union societies would assist the staunch temperance men scattered throughout a

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33 Most historians have identified middle-class involvement with temperance as a result of increased interest in political prohibition. See Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 51-6; Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 172-8; Tyrell, *Sobering Up*, 223-40 and Dick, *From Temperance to Prohibition*, 548-52 as well as Harrison, 220-9 and M.P. Sendbueler, "Battling the Bane of Our Cities: Class, Territory and the Prohibition Debate in Toronto, 1877," *Urban History Review*, 22, no. 1, (October 1993), 30-48. Feminist historians view this shift as a result of amplified participation of middle-class women in organizations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. See Ruth Bordin, *Women and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia, 1981) and Sharon Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: The WCTU, Evangelicalism and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal and Kingston, 1995).

34 On the convoluted atmosphere of urban prohibition associations in the United States, see Jack Blocker, *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890-1913* (Westport, 1976); and K. Austin Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven and London, 1985). Graeme Decarie noted the complexity of urban prohibition movements in Canada; see Decarie, "Something Old, Something New: Aspects of Prohibitionism in Ontario in the 1890s," in Donald Swainson, ed., *Oliver Mowat's Ontario* (Toronto, 1972), 154-71.



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community to work in concert with other prohibition supporters.<sup>35</sup> The Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance claimed that they would not enter into any competition with existing temperance organizations but rather relieve them of the work of legislation, so they could “prosecute their reformatory work with unremitting vigour.” As the rival of none and the helper of all, the Dominion Alliance simply combined temperance forces for political action, being both a bond of union and a centre of action in amalgamating the efforts of the temperance community. While the success of the Alliance movement as a cohesive force for prohibition in the urban areas is debatable, even Frank Spence, the secretary of the Dominion Alliance believed that the work required the organization of diverse temperance supporters. Utilizing the editorship of the *Camp Fire* as his platform, Spence argued that the separation of temperance associations was an extravagant waste, demonstrating weakness, division and dilution of purpose. Pleading for a centralized apparatus to achieve political prohibition, Spence noted with frustration that there were too many societies, as “knights and leagues, circles and lodges crowd upon us with bewilderment.”<sup>36</sup>

On the surface, temperance union associations opened their doors to all irrespective of race, creed, class or colour. To the Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League, the only way to affect the temperance revolution would be to harvest the unanimous support of all classes within the community. The League understood the importance of recruiting both the commercial middle classes and their workers, by instructing agents of total abstinence societies to approach both groups in establishing their associations. To these union associations, it would also prove beneficial to raise the leading members of society to a higher standard of rectitude, as they wielded a most powerful influence on the rest of the community. The Dominion Alliance embraced middle class groups such as the WCTU and various church synods, yet also made overtures to the Trades and Labour Council. As Council member and labour reformer Daniel O’Donoghue noted, since the TLC and the Alliance held the same goals of the moral and social elevation of the community, if the “temperance workers and

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35 This would be the credo of many temperance union societies; see *Canadian Prohibitory Liquor Law League Containing Proceedings of the Convention of the League* (Toronto, 1853), 2-3; *Proceedings of the Second Session of the Canada Temperance Union* (Napanee, 1869), 4-5; *Proceedings at the Third Annual Meeting of the Ontario Temperance and Prohibitory League* (Toronto, 1873), 3; and *Third Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League* (Montreal, 1873), 4-5.

36 See the *Camp Fire*, 1 September 1895 and 1 April 1896. See also the records of the Dominion Alliance, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7270, file #13, miscellaneous Ontario Branch records, letter from WH Howland, no date, 1 and *Second Annual Meeting of the Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic* (Toronto, 1880), 3-4.

the workmen joined hands for a common object, no liquor power would be able to resist them."<sup>37</sup>

Notwithstanding these efforts at inclusion, the urban temperance union movement was far more consciously a middle-class movement than its fraternal temperance counterparts. Even at its earliest materialization in the form of the Canadian Prohibitory Liquor Law League, temperance union promoters recognized that such movements would not be very popular, or attuned to the value system of the masses. John Dougall, the noted temperance figure from Montreal stated emphatically that the League would rest solely on the zeal, energy, perseverance and *money* of a small minority.<sup>38</sup> The Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League was even more audacious in its conscription of members from the middle classes in Quebec. As the directors of the League proclaimed, "the middle classes of the community are those from whom we must expect the largest support; not from the highest or lowest. The middle classes, strong and stalwart in their views of right and wrong, are the exponents of public opinion. They are such as no Governor, or body of rulers, dare for any length of time to set at defiance; for these reasons the efforts of the League should be directed at the middle classes."<sup>39</sup> The *Canada Citizen and Temperance Herald* therefore highlighted the drinking habits of the middle class, denying that temperance was a movement designed by the rich to crush the poor. To the editors of the *Canada Citizen*, prohibition would end the cycle of perpetual poverty caused by intemperance. Editorials in the official organ of the Dominion Alliance likewise censured the big business of alcohol in the name of the middle class, noting that hotelkeepers neglected to fund Scott Act challenges "for the benefit of metropolitan capitalists who are building up large fortunes and palatial residences, regardless of the indisputable fact that their enrichment must mean the impoverishment of the community at large."<sup>40</sup>

The creation of joint stock temperance businesses is another example of the influence of urban middle-class temperance supporters on the prohibition movement. A joint stock venture, the Temperance Colonization Society, offered shares in a landholding company with objects to colonizing tracts of land where

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37 Dominion Alliance records, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7269, file #10, minute book, 1877-99, 2 June 1886. See also the *Third Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance League*, 13 and 28-9, and *Fourth Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League* (Montreal, 1874), 3-4.

38 See the *Canadian Prohibitory Liquor Law League*, 18 and 30, and also *What Does It Cost? Statistical Report Presented to the Convention of the Canada Temperance Union* (Napanee, 1869), 4-5.

39 See the *Second Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League* (Montreal, 1872), 3 and *Third Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance League*, 13-4.

40 See the *Canada Citizen and Temperance Herald*, 29 August 1884, 98; 26 September 1884, 121; and 18 November 1887, 2.

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liquor could not be manufactured, sold, or imported. This company was unmistakably a middle-class enterprise, for out of thirty-six original investors thirty-five listed their occupation as a merchant, lawyer, clerk or minister of religion.<sup>41</sup> The Canadian Temperance League, an urban federation of many temperance groups, showed its colours by embracing the coffee house movement that originated with the Toronto Coffee House Association in 1882. In order to offset the influence of the urban workingman's tavern, coffee house advocates called upon the poor and unemployed to frequent their establishments to avoid the consumption of liquor. Thus the coffee house movement was not only a philanthropic venture but also a bourgeois business proposition, as the objects of the Toronto Coffee House Association were to provide "a check upon the use of intoxicating drinks as well as being financially viable to the shareholders."<sup>42</sup>

By the end of the century prohibition had become a hotly-contested political issue, and it was increasingly difficult for temperance union societies to completely eradicate the influence of party politics from their operations. Subsequent strides in politicizing the temperance movement came through the ballot box, as prohibition advocates wrestled with the thorny problem of electing temperance men into office. Pronouncements by the Dominion Alliance on the Prohibition Party in the United States were initially employed as a "wake-up call" to both the Conservatives and Liberals, that if the politicians could not legislate prohibition the Dominion Alliance *could* correspondingly take matters in their own political hands. This argument plainly vexed the temperance politicians in Ottawa, who trembled at the thought of another political party. While conceding the problem that many party temperance men would vote for their party every time, the vast majority of responses from temperance men of both parties concurred with the notion to avoid a third party with a prohibition platform, for it would be "defeated beyond all redemption" and create unwanted party divisions.<sup>43</sup> Frank Spence envisioned that the threat of a new party was enough to alarm the politicians, and was obviously not in favour of such a move. Concerning temperance politicians, Spence wrote, "these men are wise enough to see that the better class of the community is beginning to get impatient of the indifference shown towards a matter of the most intense

41 See the *Charter and Bylaws of the Temperance Colonization Society* (Toronto, 1882), 4-5 and 9; as well as the *Canada Citizen and Temperance Herald*, 12 September 1884, 121 and 31 October 1884, 206.

42 See the Toronto Coffee House Association fonds, AO, MU 2120, #10, miscellaneous papers, 1882-99, first annual report, November 1882 and ninth annual report, November 1890. See also the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Canadian Temperance League*, 3 and 6-7.

43 *Canada Citizen and Temperance Herald*, 8 August 1884, 61; 6 June 1885, 607; and 28 November 1887, 4. See also the records of the Dominion Alliance, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7269, file #9, responses from temperance politicians to Frank Spence, from P. Macdonald, 27 June 1888; from James Innes, 28 June 1888; and from E. Holton, 28 June 1888.

and vital importance to our country's welfare, and they see, in the near future, unless something is speedily done to avert this awful catastrophe, the disturbing political element of a CANADIAN PROHIBITION PARTY." Spence's true colours were even more revealed when he was highly critical of the New Party, a prohibition party created by the one-time editor of the *Canada Citizen*, William Burgess, and Dr. A.H. Sutherland. Stating categorically that building a political party around a single platform was simply nonsensical, Spence proceeded to condemn the procedures of the party's formation as being dissonant to the general temperance community.<sup>44</sup>

Maintaining independence in relation to political parties became even more of a burden to the Dominion Alliance during the late 1880s and beyond. As early as the 1886 annual meeting of the Alliance, discussion surrounding the possibility of creating an independent political party based on principles of prohibition degenerated into a partisan debate over the merits of the Liberal platform. Many delegates accused Spence and others of conducting a Reformer convention instead of a prohibition meeting, particularly after one delegate stated categorically that there was no need of a third option, as the Liberals clearly were the party of prohibition.<sup>45</sup> Allegations such as this would haunt Spence throughout his tenure with the Dominion Alliance, particularly in his dealings with the executive of the Royal Templars of Temperance. Complaining that the Dominion Alliance criticized the Patrons of Industry for adopting prohibition as a political ploy while avoiding the obvious parallel with Liberal plebiscites, *The Templar* reported eagerly the establishment of the Patron Prohibition Alliance. The official organ of the Royal Templars called on all members to support the new movement, and "publicly proclaim your protest against the present unholy alliance between Toryism-Grittism and liquordom, and refuse to belong to either camp, as long as both lack the courage to raise the Prohibition standard." An obvious endorsement of the Patron platform, *The Templar* echoed the *Canada Farmers' Sun* in opposing the liquor traffic, class legislation, monopolies, taxes on labour, corrupt politics, hidebound partyism, and cowardly politicians.<sup>46</sup> After these articles appeared in *The Templar*, Spence angrily denied the charges of political favouritism in a council meeting of the Dominion Alliance. Despite Spence's denunciation of *The Templar* he refused to investigate the affair, which some council members took as a confession that he feared the truth. The council also questioned Spence's motivations when both he and Liberal MP G.W. Ross opposed the nomination of

44 See the *Canada Citizen and Temperance Herald*, 18 July 1884, 9; 23 March 1888, 5; and 30 March 1888, 4.

45 See the records of the Dominion Alliance, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7269, file #10, minute book, 1877-99, 2 June 1886.

46 See *The Templar*, 21 June 1895; 8 November 1895; 22 November 1895; 29 November 1895; and 6 December 1895.

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W.W. Buchanan – an independent prohibition candidate in Wentworth – as the election eventually went to the Liberal candidate. The Montreal chapter of the Royal Templars therefore withdrew their support from the Dominion Alliance “until such time as its officers are prepared to carry out its platform” by rising above party considerations.<sup>47</sup>

In their scrutiny of the liquor traffic, temperance union societies also exhibited a bourgeois mentality by examining the economic benefits of prohibition through the new “professionalized” science of political economy. Many temperance union societies wondered where the advocates of retrenchment could be found in any discussion of the liquor traffic, when there was not a single principle of either political or social economy that was not undermined by the rumseller. The liquor trade not only destroyed the national economy and contravened legitimate commerce, but it also failed to execute the primary function of capitalization. As the executive of the Canada Temperance Union pointed out, the greater the investment in the liquor traffic, the greater the injury, the less employment of skilled and unskilled labour, and the utter loss of any profit whatsoever.<sup>48</sup> The Dominion Alliance concurred with this sentiment, reiterating the age-old argument of temperance societies that the liquor traffic interfered with legitimate commerce and the economy of the nation. In one plebiscite circular, the Alliance insisted that the trade in alcohol disrupted normal political economy, as the great amount of capital invested in the liquor traffic employed comparatively few men, and it also kept out other investments that would employ more people, pay higher wages, and benefit the people instead of making them poor.<sup>49</sup>

However, in small towns and in the rural countryside, fraternal temperance orders continued to dominate the temperance landscape. Despite a transferral of temperance support from the skilled working class to the middling sort, temperance fraternalism remained a vital force among all classes in rural areas.

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47 Spence would also receive censure for his lukewarm condemnation of the Liberals after the failed plebiscite of 1898. See the records of the Dominion Alliance, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7269, file #5, Dominion Alliance council meetings, 24 July 1896; and the *Annual Council Meeting of the Dominion Alliance, Held at Toronto* (Toronto, 1897), 16-7.

48 *What Does it Cost? The Canada Temperance Union*, 4 and 13-4. See also the *Second Annual Meeting of the Quebec Temperance League*, 42; and records of the Young Men’s Prohibition Club, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7281, file # 18, constitution and bylaws, 1886.

49 *Circular of the Dominion Alliance* (Toronto, 1898); and the records of the Dominion Alliance, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7269, file #10, minute book, 1877-99, September 1877. For these “new” ideas of political economy, see Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston, 1987); Barry Ferguson, *Remaking Liberalism: The Intellectual Legacy of Adam Shortt, O.D. Skelton, W.C. Clark and W.A. Mackintosh, 1890-1925* (Montreal and Kingston, 1993); and Sara Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto, 1996).

Much of this evidence illustrates an ideological swing to middle-class temperance rather than a literal shift, as recent studies demonstrate a strong continuing presence of skilled workers in rural and small-town fraternal temperance orders.<sup>50</sup> Although rural temperance fraternalism worked closely with organizations such as the Dominion Alliance in the promotion of the prohibition ideal, many of these associations focused on their own local battles to control the liquor traffic. Historians therefore view the breakdown of late nineteenth-century rural temperance divisions and lodges as either a losing struggle to reconstruct a rural society along temperance lines, or a failure to align properly with the hegemonic forces of an urban commercial environment.<sup>51</sup> While the issue of prohibition did have a propensity to expose the fissures inherent in the urban prohibition alliance, the dissimilar prohibition strategies concocted by rural and urban temperance supporters likewise highlighted the regionally delineated visions of temperance in central Canada.

Traditional fraternal temperance orders continued to recognize the necessity of being inclusive by opening up lodges, divisions and councils to women in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. By this period, female participation in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the prohibition movement and with temperance orders in general meant so much more than just the issue of achieving prohibition. Women's suffrage, the social purity movement, moral reform and scientific temperance would be the hallmarks of female contributions – and additions – to the temperance movement.<sup>52</sup> Much of the work done to augment a female presence in fraternal temperance societies came as a

50 Several studies on small-town Ontario fraternal temperance societies confirm a diverse membership base, including a healthy portion from skilled workers. See Christopher Anstead, "Fraternalism in Victorian Ontario: Secret Societies and Cultural Hegemony" (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1992, 325-40; and Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow*, 22-9. See particularly Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto, 1996), 85-95 and 246-9 and her work on temperance in Thorold, Campbellford and Ingersoll.

51 For the former view, see the work of Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 85-9 and Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty*, 139-50. On the latter view, see Christopher Anstead, "Hegemony and Failure: Orange Lodges, Temperance Lodges and Respectability in Victorian Ontario," in Jack Blocker and Cheryl Warsh, eds., *The Changing Face of Drink: Substance, Imagery and Behavior* (Ottawa, 1997), 163-88.

52 On women's increased involvement in temperance after the American Civil War and Confederation, see Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 61-94; Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum*, 44-70 and Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto, 1983), especially chapter five, "Temperate Beginnings," 69-85. That the WCTU was an exercise in proto-feminism, see Bordin, *Women and Temperance and Mattingly, Well-Tempered Women*. For the WCTU, scientific temperance and the moral purity movement, see Cook. Daniel Malleck makes a very compelling argument that the WCTU focused on education, moral purity, evangelicalism and prohibition as the local context warranted. See Malleck, "Priorities in Development in Four WCTU's in Ontario, 1877-95," in Warsh and Blocker, *The Changing Face of Drink*, 189-208.

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response to the threat posed by groups such as the WCTU to their membership. For example, the pro-Liberal paper of the IOGT edited by Frank Spence, the *Camp Fire*, came out in favour of votes for women. Of course, espousal of female suffrage by most prohibition supporters was simply a desire to unleash the potential power of temperance women into the electorate to achieve prohibition.<sup>53</sup> And yet in many respects, women continued to be mere spectators in fraternal temperance orders, as the female secretary in the Plantagenet council of the Royal Templars of Temperance discovered during a discussion on the lack of women in the entertainment committee. Such a course of action did not meet with the approval of one of the Brothers who justly thought that the “fairer sex” should have better representation. With some disdain at the lack of progressive thinking in the council, the secretary wrote, “evidently the Council did not approve of the suggestion of the upholder of woman rights as the amendment was carried with the proportion 4:1 in favour of mankind.” Efforts to include women in fraternal temperance orders would eventually come to naught, as the WCTU could offer women complete autonomy in the function of their operations.<sup>54</sup>

The Royal Templars of Temperance strictly adhered to traditional temperance society values of inclusion, proclaiming as their objectives the promotion of temperance, morality and industry among all classes. And yet the Royal Templars – another U.S.-based temperance fraternal order that reached a zenith in popularity in the 1870s – also echoed the more exclusionary discourse of radical temperance societies such as the mid-century Sons of Temperance. As one of their ritual odes proclaimed, real labouring men did not include

They who creep in drives and lanes,  
To rob their betters of honest gains;  
The rich that stoop to devour the poor,  
The tramp that begs from door to door;  
The rogues that love the darkened sky,  
And steal and rob and cheat and lie;  
The loafing wights and senseless bloats,  
Who drain their pockets to wet their throats!

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- 53 A debate held in the council room of the Cherry Valley Royal Templars of Temperance came out in favour of votes for women; apparently the sisters managed to persuade their male colleagues. See the records of the Cherry Valley council, Royal Templars, AO, MU 7793 #3, minute book, 1892-1900, 22 March 1893, 11. See also Sherlocke, *Present Aspect of the Temperance Movement*, 18-22; the *Camp Fire*, 1 March 1895; the *Quebec Good Templar*, 1 May 1892, 125-26; and *The Templar*, 8 November 1895.
- 54 This was also the conclusion of Cook, 24-9. See the Orono Division, Sons of Temperance fonds, AO, MU 2880, minute book #7, 1881-91, 30 May 1888, 428; records of the Williamstown Royal Templars, F.D. McLennan papers, AO, MU 7914, file #8, minute book, 1891-92, 29 May 1891 and file #9, minute book, 1893-94, 7 April 1893; Plantagenet Royal Templar records, AO, MU 7793 #2, minute book, 1892-94, 11 November 1892.



Not only did the Royal Templars return to a denunciation of both upper- and lower-class drinking patterns, editorials in their official temperance paper, *The Templar*, likewise lauded the Trades and Labour Council for supporting prohibition. *The Templar's* editors praised the TLC for recognizing that the saloon was the enemy of the workingman, and that some steps must be taken to protect industrial workers from its machinations.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, one of the more popular entertainments of the Royal Templars was known as the pauper party, where participants could either dress in rags, or be fined for wearing expensive items. Charging five cents for a watch and chain, pearl necklaces and diamond tiaras, and two cents for rings and other light jewellery, all the proceeds would either be given to the poor or be used by the various councils to advance the cause of prohibition. And yet it appears that the increasing popularity of the Royal Templars was buoyed by a return to the older political economy of producerism, through the restoration of the benefit system of fraternal temperance. Not only did the benefit system teach members to be provident and acquire habits of thrift, sobriety, and industry, fraternal temperance would provide pecuniary assistance to a departed member's loved ones.<sup>56</sup>

Thus the popularity of the Royal Templars with both the rural working classes and the urban industrial classes seemed to be more a function of providing assurance and sick benefits to members than the sustaining of a new political economy. In order to improve the moral, intellectual, social, and physical condition of its members, the Royal Templars instituted a "magnificent system" of protection from sickness and the hardships associated with the passing of a relative. Fraternal temperance orders could offer a more comprehensive and economical benefits package, as "total abstainers [were] less liable to sickness and accident, live longer than non-abstainers, and suffer injustice when classified with such inferior risks in insurance companies or benefit societies." Underscoring the intense competition for customers in the insurance and benefits field by the latter half of the century, the Royal Templars managed to capture its share of working-class members. After subtracting occupations not listed and female members, labourers and farmers made up fifty-eight percent of one rural council, while fifty-six percent of the membership in the north Toronto council of the Royal Templars came from skilled workers. Traditional fraternal temperance orders were not slow to take advantage, as by the 1880s

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55 See *The Templar*, 21 June 1895 and 6 December 1895; *Royal Templar Platform: A Collection of Readings and Recitations for Council and Lodge, Social Entertainments and Public Meetings* (Hamilton, 1892), 63-6 and *Trumpet Notes of the Temperance Battlefield, Royal Templars of Temperance* (Hamilton, 1889), 19.

56 See *The Templar*, 8 November 1895 and 13 December 1895; as well as *Trumpet Notes for the Royal Templars*, back page. See also the records of North Toronto council of the Royal Templars, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7276, file #2, petitions of membership, back page; and *Manual of the Select Degree and Ceremony of Installation*, 10-11.

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the IOGT established a fund for mutual assistance in case of disability, sickness, or death. Evidently this feature served to lure many skilled workers back into the fraternal temperance fold, particularly in small towns and in the rural countryside.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of maintaining their system of benefits, fraternal temperance orders continued to hearken to the precepts of honest industry, mutual aid, and the individual work ethic. As an important virtue practiced both individually and collectively, temperance supporters persistently targeted alcohol as the impediment to honest labour. Individually, intemperance led to idleness, profligacy, and vice; in a community, the liquor traffic damaged legitimate businesses by laying unwanted financial burdens upon society:

Drinking habits mean idleness and unthrift. Drunkness [sic] seriously impairs the ability of the people to indulge in the luxuries, sometimes even in the necessities, of life. The drink waste is a serious interference with the purchasing power of the people, and therefore, an impediment to wealth production ... All this poverty, crime, and suffering impose additional financial burdens upon the community. As a whole, we are taxed heavily, we suffer keenly, as the outcome of a system under which some gratify their appetites and a few others grow rich at the general expense.<sup>58</sup>

Not only did temperance orders reproduce statistics illustrating the devastating impact of the liquor trade, many fraternal temperance lodges, divisions and councils held debates and discussions on the relationship between temperance and political economy. Whether debating the merits of Commercial Union, freer trade or commercial trade versus agriculture, the one thing held in common by all fraternal temperance societies was the detrimental economic effect of alcohol upon society.<sup>59</sup>

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57 See *Constitutions of the Grand, District and Subordinate Order of Good Templars*, (Toronto, 1889), 13-15; *the Camp Fire*, 1 September 1895; and for the statistics of the Brooklin council and in North Toronto, see the North Toronto council of the Royal Templars, John Linton fonds, AO, MU 7276, file #2, petitions of membership, back page and the Brooklin Council, John Witford fonds, AO, MU 7825, membership list, 1895-1906. The statistics compiled by Lynne Marks and Christopher Anstead in the towns of Ingersoll, Campbellford and Thorold are also invaluable in this regard, although neither focus on the benefits offered by the IOGT and the Royal Templars as an explanation for their popularity among skilled workers. See Anstead, 325-40, “Hegemony and Failure;” Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow*, 22-9; and Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 85-95 and 246-9.

58 See the *Camp Fire*, 1 October 1895; 1 April 1895; 1 June 1898 and 1 September 1898, as well as the *Quebec Good Templar*, 1 June 1893, 144.

59 See W. Bradley, *Facts and Figures Dedicated to the People of Canada* (Toronto, 1872) and the *Camp Fire*, 1 August 1898. See also the records of the Williamstown Royal Templars, in the F.D. McLennan collection, AO, MU 7915, file #1, minute book, 1894-1903, 24 March 1893; and the Orono Division of the Sons of Temperance, AO, MU 2879, minute book #5, 1870-77, 11 January 1871.

Even though the extension of the benefit system maintained working-class participation in late-nineteenth century temperance fraternal orders, evidence of an ideological shift to the middle class appears in some of the condescending discourse of these societies. Instead of embracing the radical worker subculture of their mid-century forbearers, both the Sons of Temperance and the IOGT engaged in a more exclusionary dialogue by the end of the century despite a strong presence of skilled workers. While lauding the honest and noble workingman, the IOGT periodical the *Camp Fire* condemned the “drones in the hives of industry, the loungers in the street, whose useless hands are stretched to take.” A far cry from the censorship of the genteel upper class for their drinking habits a few decades earlier, fraternal temperance orders instead focused on how workingmen became idle wastrels as a result of drinking. In a lecture to the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance in Canada East, L.M. Sherlocke called on the working class to be more temperate in gaining the world’s respect and a greater portion of their own productions. Conceding that the working class had suffered more wrongs than any other class in existence, Mrs. Sherlocke invited workers to concentrate on the real enemy, as King Capital indeed chastened them with whips, but King Alcohol punished them with scorpions.<sup>60</sup>

Nonetheless, while rural and small-town fraternal temperance orders were indeed attracted to prohibition on a national scale, they placed more relevance on neighbouring efforts to control the liquor traffic. Acknowledging that the temperance question was of necessity a political one, local temperance societies offered both financial and moral support to the Dominion Alliance. The Williamstown and Fergus councils established a plebiscite committee to handle all the campaign work, while the Fergus Royal Templars took the direct route by protesting to their MP over a treaty to admit French wines.<sup>61</sup> Often divisions of the Sons of Temperance and councils of the Royal Templars petitioned local municipal councils and license inspectors to curtail the amount of drinking establishments in the town or village. The Fergus council of the Royal Templars went even so far as to request the village constable to pay special attention to the Sabbath closing of barrooms, the selling of alcohol to minors and other

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60 See the *Camp Fire*, 1 February 1895 and 1 November 1897. See also the *Sons of Temperance Record and Prohibition Advocate*, 1 February 1898 and 1 July 1898 as well as L.M. Sherlocke, *Present Aspect of the Temperance Movement* (Montreal, 1872), 4-7, 16-17.

61 Graeme Decarie in “The Prohibition Movement in Ontario, 1894-1916” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 1972), illustrates that prohibition sentiment was strongest in rural Ontario. See also the records of the Cherry Valley Royal Templars, AO, MU 7793 #3, minute book, 1892-1900, 1 August 1894 and 16 May 1898; Williamstown Royal Templars, in the F.D. McLennan collection, AO, MU 7915, file #1, minute book, 1894-1903, 17 December 1896, 69 and 9 May 1898, 131; Fergus Royal Templar records, Templin Family collection, AO, MU 2957, minute book, 1892-96, 4 September 1893, 103 and 19 March 1894, 131.

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infractions. The Orono division of the Sons of Temperance often had complaints about the way inspectors handled the license acts, offering to pay for the prosecution of taverns under the Dunkin Act. The Orono Sons of Temperance then concluded by the end of the century that the most effective means of securing a dry Orono was to have a Son appointed to the office of Tavern inspector.<sup>62</sup> Although these rural temperance societies were more than willing to assist the urban prohibition alliance with their national prohibition labours, they placed far more prominence on mutual assistance through the benefits system and their own local labours in halting the spread of the liquor traffic.

Changes in the rural political landscape in the latter decades of the nineteenth century also explain the renewed interest in prohibition by temperance fraternal orders in the central Canadian countryside. Despite the fact that prohibition in the urban environment upheld middle-class values, in the rural experience temperance and prohibition could also empower the marginal in censuring the accepted social order. In this context, rural fraternal temperance orders could also participate in a populist critique of politicians, big government, monopoly capitalism and the professional classes.<sup>63</sup> Even though the Grand Temple of the IOGT decreed in 1875 that fraternal temperance orders should concentrate their energies in obtaining adherents from all parties, irrespective of their creed in religion or politics, the surest means to achieve prohibition was for temperance men to act politically. However, the IOGT also effectively criticized democratic governments for their failure in carrying the subject immediately before the voters:

While we are not a political party, and leave every man free to vote with his party and for such men and principles as he may prefer, we do protest against men being nominated for office who are not known, beyond question, to be competent and reliable moral men, who will not disgrace the country by habits of personal intemperance, or debauch the public conscience and corrupt pub-

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62 See the Orono Division, Sons of Temperance fonds, AO, MU 2879, minute book #4, 1866-70, 14 April 1869, 251 and 28 April 1869, 254. See also the records of the Fergus Royal Templars, Templin family collection, AO, MU 2957, minute book, 1892-96, 8 August 1892, 10; 3 April 1893, 73; and 19 June 1893, 90.

63 Although some historians view populism as a movement restricted to agrarian concerns, more recent historiography recognizes that groups as diverse as labour unions and religious movements could participate in populist rhetoric. See Russell Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism: Perspectives on Ontario Agrarian Movements* (Toronto 1975); E.D. Shortt, "Social Change and Political Crisis in Rural Ontario: The Patrons of Industry, 1889-1896," in Swainson, *Oliver Mowat's Ontario*, 211-35; Ramsay Cook, "Tillers and Toilers: The Rise and Fall of Populism in Canada in the 1890s," *CHA Historical Papers* (Guelph, 1984), 5-20 and especially Sid Noel, "Early Populist Tendencies in Ontario Political Culture," *Ontario History* 90, no. 2 (September 1998) 173-87; and Louise Mussio, "The Origins and Nature of the Holiness Movement Church: A Study in Religious Populism," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series 7 (1997), 81-104.

lic morals by favouring measures unfriendly to temperance reform, or defeat our cause by refusing to support and enforce such laws as are calculated to protect society against the evils of the liquor traffic. That if political parties will persist in putting forward men who are unworthy of our confidence, they must take the responsibility of any divisions or defeats that may result in our refusing to support them.<sup>64</sup>

Although many rural fraternal orders supported the middle-class dominated Dominion Alliance in their prohibition efforts, often these societies held their own populist agendas. Thus, many responses to the Alliance equalled the poorly worded reply from the Cherry Valley Royal Templars, in “acknowledging our councils cooperation with all truly temperance sentiment and work with zeal to gain such a majority for Proabition as will maik Politions stand agast.”<sup>65</sup>

By the 1890s, the connection between temperance and populism became complete, when the Royal Templars of Temperance officially supported the newfound alliance of urban workers and rural farmers through the Patrons of Industry. Undoubtedly the Royal Templars knew their audience – the “horny handed workmen and the ploughmen from the farms” – as many local councils supported Patron candidates in the Ontario provincial elections.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the official organ of the Royal Templars, *The Templar*, attempted to fulfill the mandate of an “aggressive Christian temperance order” by claiming that applied Christianity in the community would purify politics, destroy monopoly, wipe out class privileges, and establish the brotherhood of man. *The Templar* published articles on Henry George’s single tax, J.W. Bengough’s views on tax reform, social purity issues, and the views of the Christian Socialist movement, which claimed that competition was cruel and anti-Christian in forcing businessmen to grind the poor. To the Grand Council of the Royal Templars such enquiries were the foundation of a populist response to political economy, a “science which often traces want and misery, enforced idleness and brutalizing conditions to monopoly and privilege [and which] is not likely to make progress till it has become popularized. How shall we be fed? Wherewithal

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64 See the *22nd Annual Session of the Grand Lodge, International Order of Good Templars* (Napanee, 1875), 9-11; and Thomas Lawless, *The Canada Digest, International Order of Good Templars* (Hamilton, 1872), 10-12. See also the *Camp Fire*, 1 January 1895; 1 May 1895; 1 February 1896; and the *Sons of Temperance Record and Prohibition Advocate*, 1 February 1898.

65 See Decarie, “The Prohibition Movement in Ontario,” also the records of the Cherry Valley Royal Templars, AO, MU 7793 #3, minute book, 1892-1900, 1 August 1894 and 16 May 1898.

66 For local councils supporting Patron candidates, see records of the Williamstown Royal Templars in the F.D. McLennan fonds, AO, MU 7914, file #9, minute book, 1893-94, 26 May 1893; Plantagenet Royal Templars, AO, MU 7793, #2, minute book, 1892-94, 28 May 1893; and Cherry Valley Royal Templars, AO, MU 7793 #3, minute book, 1892-1900, 1 June and 15 June 1897.

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shall we be clothed? These are the questions with which political economy attempts to deal, and since food and clothing are the first requisites of life, political economy is the basis of social science."<sup>67</sup>

Early temperance orders in both the rural countryside and in the burgeoning urban areas utilized the temperance ideal to construct a community not only free from alcohol, but one that on the surface would be inclusive and open to all classes and creeds. Unquestionably, the erosion of this ideal in mid-nineteenth century temperance societies can be measured with the unconditional acceptance of legislative prohibition, and the political and religious squabbling that accompanied temperance discourse. Despite protestations to the contrary, by injecting political discussions into the question of temperance in the latter decades of the nineteenth century ensured that the conflicting philosophies held by rural and urban ideologues would create lasting fissures in Canadian society that would not end with the coming of the twentieth century. The dry utopia envisioned by temperance supporters of all classes in the latter decades of the century would not only fall short of the ideal, in attempting to fashion such an idyllic world temperance societies would hasten the demise of an ideological temperance community so carefully constructed throughout the Victorian period.

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67 See *The Templar*, 21 June 1895; 8 November 1895; 13 December 1895 and *Trumpet Notes of the Royal Templars*, back page, as well as Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 10-18.