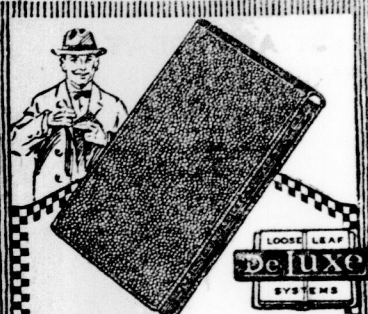




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HOW GOVERNMENT SALE WORKS IN MANITOBA

(One of a series of twenty articles following impartial investigation of government sale of liquor as practised in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec.)

INCOME TAX IN MANITOBA FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY IN SPITE OF LIQUOR MONEY

Provincial Treasurer States Profits From Sales Were So Small New Taxes Were Necessary To Meet Government Expenditures—Breweries Alone Reaped Great Harvest.

BUSINESSMEN FIND TRADE SUFFERING

The Advertiser is receiving hundreds of requests for past issues containing earlier articles of this series. It is impossible to fill such orders since each edition is completely sold on the day of publication. Persons desiring extra copies of these articles are advised to forward their orders in advance.

ARTICLE NO. 6.

It was 425 Henry avenue, the Manitoba liquor control commission's headquarters and warehouse, that I talked with Chairman Waugh, who is charged with the task of directing the sale of liquor in Manitoba. I first wrote, "who is charged with the task of controlling the brewers and bootleggers of the province." But in a sense, that is not true. The commission sells whiskey itself and it has power to impose regulations on breweries. But it does not enforce the law. That part of the control is in the hands of the organization that formerly was responsible for enforcing prohibition. In that respect Manitoba is different from other provinces.

When I reached the Henry street building I went by mistake into the warehouse downstairs, where I saw a great variety of bottles containing hard stuff. The bottles were stacked up in pigeonholes to a considerable height, some on their sides, and some on their bottoms.

Chairman Waugh Explains.

Mr. Waugh was upstairs. He readily explained the system and its operation. He said there were nine places in Manitoba where the government took orders for spirituous liquors. Five of these were in Winnipeg, the other four being at Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin and La Pas. There were five warehouses from which the government distributed the liquor it sold. Only one of these was in Winnipeg, the one at headquarters. The others were in the outside places where they had combined order offices and warehouses.

Mr. Waugh said that until the day I saw him the breweries had been free to sell up to any amount of beer to an individual. Persons who bought in large quantities re-sold to the hotels and to other parties who re-tailed in an illicit way. It was in an effort to stop this practice that the commission had recommended that the individual citizen be limited to 48 pints per week or 120 pints per month. He hoped this would have a salutary effect when combined with the discontinuance of the use of kegs and barrels. All liquors hereafter must be distributed in bottles by the breweries' own employees and no commission be paid. He said he believed bootlegging or the illicit re-sale, as he prefers to call it, would be stopped if the order-in-council announcing the new restrictions proves to be valid.

In a moment Mr. Waugh corrected his last statement. "No, it cannot be stopped," he declared. "No law that can be devised

will stop re-sale in every form. There will be lawbreakers no matter what kind of a law you work under. There is no perfect preventive. We are doing all we can and will continue to do so."

An Indignant Citizen.

Mr. Waugh was interrupted by a phone call. The citizen on the line was very indignant that he should be limited to 48 pints of beer per week. He said he could drink a whole case per day. Mr. Waugh told him that he thought the provision already made was fairly generous and that if the citizen did not like it he would have to carry his grievance to the government.

The liquor control chairman emphasized the fact that his commission does not enforce the law. It was his duty to sell. It was other people's duty to enforce. Things were different in Ontario. He did not feel that too many bodies had to do with the restrictive measures. He worked with the city police, the provincial police, the city health committee, the old temperance law enforcement body which has taken over the enforcement of government control act, and everybody else who had duties therewith.

If his commission had to enforce the act, Mr. Waugh said, it would be another attorney-general's department. He saw no advantage in the entire enforcement being put into one hand. While he could not cancel hotel licenses for violation of the liquor act, the city council was taking power to do so. Actually, liquor could not be legally sold in a hotel, though it could be drunk there in a guest's room as being a place of temporary residence. The limitation of spirits to one case per week, he declared, was being enforced.

Time Enough to Judge.

Unlike Mayor Farmer, Mr. Waugh thought the government control act had had time to demonstrate itself. The public should have a fairly good idea now as to whether it was all right. When reminded that measures, some of which were drastic, had been put through only the day previously by both the municipal and provincial governments in an effort to improve conditions, Mr. Waugh said experience was needed to show what ought to be done and no doubt even better regulations would be found some day. All the commission's regulations had to be sanctioned by the orders-in-council of the government.

Asked whether it could be fairly said that the control commission was pressing the sale of liquor, Mr. Waugh replied in the negative. His idea of success was not the bulk of the sales. He was interested in the moral as well as the financial side. The commission did not advertise. Nor would it allow any brewer or distiller to mention the name of the government control commission in its advertisements.

Mr. Waugh declined to discuss the relative merits of various plans for controlling the evils of drinking. As to conditions in Manitoba, he said: "The police court records show whether there has been more or less drinking."

Effect on Provincial Revenues.

From Chairman Waugh I passed to the parliament buildings in the hope of getting from Hon. Mr. Black, the provincial treasurer, the figures of the gross sales of the liquor control board for each month and some expression of his personal opinion. I asked him why it was necessary to amend the liquor control regulations at this time.

"We were told that things were wide open and that the hotels were selling across the bar," he said. "It was said that the breweries were not living up to the spirit of the law and that we should limit the amount they could sell to an individual. Previously there was no limit."

The provincial treasurer said he could not state the amount of gross revenue from the sales of liquor and the tax on beer, nor even the amount of profits from the sale of liquor. He had estimated the net revenue at half a million dollars and a similar amount for the municipalities. He said that would not be very far wrong. There had been a revenue from the old prohibition act of about \$150,000 in fines and of about \$100,000 in profits from the dispensaries. So that the province's increased income from the sale of whiskey and spirituous drinks was only \$250,000.

Mr. Black said that the amount of liquor profit promised to be so inconsiderable that, after carefully estimating what government control would bring in, the government last spring had to impose direct taxation in the form of an income tax for the first time. The provincial treasurer did not tell me what the income tax

amounts to, but others said that on the man with a moderate income it was about equal to the dominion income tax.

The treasurer pointed out that the brewers keep all the beer profits. The whiskey profits come from stores in only five municipalities, but will be distributed among all the municipalities of the province on the basis of assessment. I have some ground for thinking that the gross revenue will be around five millions, and that the commission aimed at a 25 per cent profit.

Mr. Black felt that the government had done well in handling the finances of the province. When it took hold in 1912 things were in a bad way. The net expenditure, leaving out interest charges, in 1921, had been \$6,800,000, which the new government reduced by \$600,000 in 1923. But in spite of these economies and the liquor revenue a provincial income tax was a clear necessity.

Effect on the Homes.

The manager of a large real estate firm on Main street on whom I called because I had noticed his business card in the newspapers, told me how he thought government control affected the building of homes and the thriftiness of the people.

"I like a glass myself, so I suppose I am inconsistent," he said. "For I certainly think our system of government control is hard on business. It could hardly benefit it when millions of money is spent in such a way that it might just as well be poured into the sewers. There is nothing tangible to show for it."

This witness testified that his company had had much more trouble with customers buying real estate on the monthly payment plan since the province dropped prohibition for government control. In at least one case he had personal knowledge that the drink habit was to blame. In working class districts he was also experiencing unusual trouble in getting householders to renew their fire insurance, their plea being that they could not afford it.

A Temperance Man's View.

Another real estate man, F. C. Hamilton, Portage avenue, whom I saw later, turned out to be a leading temperance advocate. He said his own business did not emphasize the detriment to thrift emphasized by his fellow realtor. But he said that it obviously must be harmful to spend fortunes on liquor and send two-thirds of the money out of the country, as was being done at present. His view was that Manitoba's experience proved that government control was much harder to enforce than prohibition. There were ten times as much bootlegging. The floodgates were open. Control was non-existent. Instead of government control reducing taxation, the province imposed for the first time a provincial income tax six months after they knew what revenue to expect from the government sale of liquor.

The provincial government savings offices show an increase in business during the last twelve months, the total amount of deposits reaching nine millions. Recent deposits have been helped by the Home Bank fall-benefit plan. The biggest month the government savings offices ever had was in August of last year before government control was established. I am unable to say definitely whether the branch savings offices of the chartered banks in Winnipeg have had a good year, but I have been given to believe that they did not do as well as the government savings offices.

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KILLS SELF AND CHILD OVER DEATH OF BABY

Montreal Woman Becomes Depressed Over Loss of Youngster.

Canadian Press Despatch. Montreal, Oct. 2.—Depressed over the loss of her five-months-old baby a few months ago and having told the neighbors that she "had nothing to live for," Mrs. William Brown of Verdun, strangled her other child, a five-year-old girl, this afternoon, then went into the kitchen, turned on the gas and asphyxiated herself. The tragedy was discovered by her husband when he returned from work.

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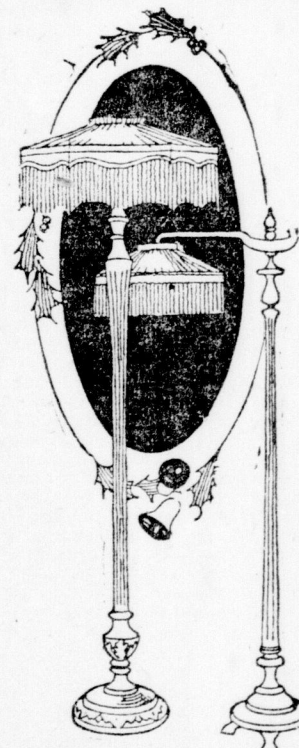
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