

"Provincial Failure to Prohibit"

(By James Lockington, Vancouver Grammar School)

The following notes and observations on the evil results in B. C. of Provincial failure to prohibit—may help towards the solution of the question asked by the December, 1923, writer in the New York Times. "Why this alarming preponderance of Crime in America over that in Britain?"

Every reader of these notes will agree to the truth of the premises.

1. That as neglect of Health Laws, brings disease, and that unchecked means Death, so slackness in enforcement of law, results in crime, and that unchecked means anarchy.
2. That one Law increasingly violated, not only intensifies the crime that Law forbids, but also endangers obedience to all Laws and cheapens and deadens the authority of Law itself.

Will every reader now consider the question.

What virtue or force have the Prohibition Laws in B. C.?

The writer considers, that enforcement being lax, they neither prohibit nor control, they induce daily deceit, suspicion or crime, and illicit manufacture or distribution.

This has led to fraudulent trading of INFERIOR LIQUORS at exorbitant prices, making it possible for ADVENTUROUS BOOTLEGGERS to get rich quick—either by successful profiteering, taking all risks in defiance of Law; or by connivance with lax or hoodwinked executive agents, arranging to defeat the Law. Now substitute "DELETERIOUS DRUGS" for "inferior liquors"; and "DOPE SMUGGLERS" for "adventurous bootleggers," and read the above paragraph over again; and again ask 'Why is this lawlessness permitted in B. C.'

What responsibility for deterioration of character, for moral depravity, for crimes of violence, do you think, is due to legislators, who neither wish nor will to control the existing Law, nor to provide and enforce effectual law? And how much of this guilt is shared by each and all of us as individuals and societies? — Is it true in B. C. that justice is corrupt at its source, that so-called Government Control brings funds to the Government—too ample to be too lightly esteemed politically?—and that like other bootleggers, their occupation and profit would be gone, if there were no dry areas?

The Law has one obviously simple remedy as regards Beer—"Insist on the manufacture of a good pure Ale or Beer made of malt and hops; and give it open sale without restric-

tion, at so much per dozen bottles, like other soft drinks; and take Ale and Beer from under the Licensing Act altogether." People in whatever station of life are mostly moderate, rational, responsible, and self-controlled. Trust them! No need at all to rob the poor man, or rich man of his Beer!—The Government which will make this reform, will be a Government trusted and approved by a large standing majority of sensible citizens, who will aid in the enforcement of crime-restraining laws, whether against under-proof or over-proof spirits in Licensing Act, or against adulteration in Food Acts.

Our Local Papers tell us, that people in B. C. and U. S. A. have been suffering in an unprecedented manner, from Bootlegging and Drug Smuggling, from Trade and Bank and lesser Hold-ups, from profiteer graft in Trading, and from political graft in Governing. And one knows that this lax morality of right and wrong is induced by the pursuit of material prosperity only, in a youthful land ignoring spiritual traditions almost entirely; and neglecting those innate honest principles of character-forming, which make for nobility of soul.

Everything in the social scheme of things nowadays, shews a total disregard of the true bonds of society intercourse, "love and honour to God, and love and honour among ourselves." Everything is subservient to the question, What do I get out of it? And indicates a standard of morality, of which this Continent ought not to be proud. When the highest wisdom of mortals, or the fear of God, is gone—then restraints and self-control are gone—and crime must increase.

One wonders whether Government Lax Law Methods of a free and easy kind, support or encourage Lax Trade Methods, in certain Banking, and Trust, and Natural Resources, and Trading Companies, where liberty to trade has been interpreted as license to plunder. Many public enquiries during the last decade, resulting only in immunity from punishment, makes our wonderment give place to probability.

Students of the question, raised by the New York Times writer, of the "causes of the wide differences of percentages of crime in different countries in the world"—will certainly find their answer in a percentage classification under National Honour.

And a modifying factor will be found for a greater or less percentage,—as Protective, Trust, and Monopoly Methods, dominate over Fair, Open and Free Trade Methods.

ON THE PACIFIC

Beyond the moonset rolls the sea
To where pagodas are,
Beyond the clouds whose riven wrack
Reveals a single star;
For it is day in green Cathay,
Noon in strange lands afar.

From north to south the marshalled waves
In discipline austere
March endlessly with foam-plumed crests,
Epauettes greenly clear,
To break no more on any shore
For half a hemisphere.

But when a thread of timid light
In the dark east will dare
To stitch the low hem of the sky
Before the high clouds flare,
A hard black row of hills will show
Their sullen presence there.

—LIONEL STEVENSON

Concerning Lionel Stevenson

(Whose picture appears on the cover of this issue)

Lionel Stevenson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1902 and has lived in Canada since 1907, spending the first eleven years of the period in the Cowichan district, Vancouver Island. He graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1922 and received a fellowship at the University of Toronto, taking the degree of M. A. there in 1923. Since then he has been a teaching fellow on the staff of the University of California, where he hopes to receive the degree of Ph. D. next spring. However, he has no desire to sever his affiliation with Canada, but on the contrary is continuing to make a special study of Canadian literature. His articles in the Canadian Bookman and elsewhere are an effort to define the distinctive qualities of Canadian literature and its relation to the general thought of the age. One of these articles was reproduced in the English journal, Public Opinion. His poetry also has appeared in various periodicals. It is six years since his first contribution to the British Columbia Monthly was published, and its pages have since contained short stories, critical articles and verse from his pen.