

"Is drinking decreasing?" Drunkenness certainly is. Drinking apparently is not, if one is to judge by the statistics issued upon the subject. The following table, issued by the Inland Revenue Department, shows that in the last twenty-five years there has been a considerable decrease in the amount of spirits consumed, but a very considerable increase in the amount of beer and wine.

Table showing the annual consumption per head of the undermentioned articles paying excise or customs duties, and the revenue per head derived annually.

Years.	Spirits. Gals.	Beer. Gals.	Wine. Gals.
1867	1.621	1.973	.098
1868	1.604	2.269	.174
1869	1.124	2.290	.115
1870	1.434	2.163	.195
1871	1.578	2.490	.259
1872	1.723	2.774	.257
1873	1.682	3.188	.238
1874	1.994	3.012	.288
1875	1.394	3.091	.149
1876	1.204	2.454	-.177
1877	.975	2.322	.096
1878	.960	2.169	.096
1879	1.131	2.209	.104
1880	.715	2.248	.077
1881	.922	2.293	.099
1882	1.009	2.747	.120
1883	1.090	2.882	.135
1884	.998	2.924	.117
1885	1.126	2.639	.109
*1886	.711	2.839	.110
1887	.746	3.084	.095
1888	.645	3.247	.094
1889	.776	3.263	.097
1890	.883	3.360	.104
1891	.743	3.790	.111
Average	1.151	2.708	.140

The general supposition is that drinking has very considerably decreased of late years. My own impression is that the facts as shown by the table above are correct; that while there is less immoderate drinking than there was years ago, there is a more general consumption of liquor, especially of beer and light wines.

Adulteration.—This evil is much worse than is generally supposed. The increased duty on spirits has led, not only to a great amount of smuggling, but also to very general adulteration. I know of houses, both in Quebec and Ontario, entirely engaged in the manufacture of adulterated liquors. This is a most serious evil, and one that the authorities should take strong action against. I should favor as strong a law against the adulteration of liquors as could be framed, and have very frequent inspections,

Does reducing the number of licensed places, beyond reasonable limits, decrease drinking? Unhesitatingly I say no. It results, where a number of places are cut off, in granting a larger monopoly over a more considerable area to the places that are left, in larger numbers of people gathering in those places with the consequent temptation to stay where the crowd is; in excessive drinking, in those places when they are very far apart, through the fact that another drink will not be easily obtained before reaching their destination, and in supplies of liquor being kept in private houses. All the facts obtainable go to show that a reduction in the number of licenses increases drunkenness instead of diminishing it, and the cause of this apparent anomaly is to be found in the statements made above. For instance, in Toronto, the Fleming by-law came into effect on May 1st, 1887, and it struck off 74 hotel and 16 shop licenses. Three months were allowed to dispose of the stocks, so that the by-law actually went into oper-

*Duty increased.