BEER AND WINE IN QUEBEC

By Edith M. Luke.

As all the world knows, we expected to join the prohibition provinces last May, for by long, hard fighting 1,200 municipalities in Quebec had gone dry in recent years under local option, leaving only 100 more to be redeemed, and Sir Lomer Gouin had declared himself a partisan of temperance. We had also found, in all our local option campaigns, that the Dominion Alliance and the Anti-Liquor League might depend fully upon the co-operation of La Ligue Anti-Alcoolique, led by Judge Lafontaine, for it may be said, en passant, that the French and English have co-operated more fully in the fight for temperance than in any other movement. Then, too, we had learned that the priests for the most part were with us, and many an interesting story might be written of the co-operation of Roman Catholic priest and Protestant minister in this or that hard-won local option victory. Archbishop Bruchesi declared some years ago that he would never rest until every municipality in Quebec had gone dry, and Cardinal Begin advocated a temperance vote in L'Action Catholique. Then again, the Premier stated that if we would be patient and wait until May 1st, 1919, the Province of Quebec should have a prohibition law more permanent, and on a surer foundation, than that of any other province. In fact, the Provincial Government gave to Quebec in February, 1918, what was to be a permanent prohibition measure, coming to effect May 1st, 1919. This measure was to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors, save for sacramental, medicinal and manufacturing purposes. So it was felt that at last the battle was won, and that children would be clothed, fed and educated, and wives and mothers would breathe freely in Quebec, as elsewhere. As late as February and March last old topers here in Montreal were known to say, "I know it has got the best of me, and I seem powerless to resist; but, thank God, after May 1st it will be taken out of my hands, for I shall not be able to get it. Then I shall be a man again." Doctors who were watching anxiously over alcoholic patients told me that there would be hope for all after May 1st. But while the temperance people were thus looking forward to the dawn of the new day, the liquor people were haunting the legislative halls at Quebec, and craftily, adroitly, surreptitiously planning a "coup."

They knew that it was useless to ask for or expect a continuance of the old regime of bars and hard liquor, so they joined the temperance people in their cry of "Away with the bar and away with hard liquor"; but they added this corollary, "leave us beer and wine." The legislators were won over; some say money flowed as freely as spirits; at any rate the Premier announced that in place of the promised temperance legislation he would submit a beer and wine referendum to the people on April 10. Temperance forces were hastily organized, and a heroic effort was made to lay the matter before the people in its proper perspective; but, to the surprise of everyone, the Archbishop failed to issue a pastoral letter enjoining the people to vote against beer and wine. In talking with Mr. Carson a few evenings ago at the Bible House as to the reason of this default, the veteran temperance campaigner said: "I think the Roman Catholic Church was afraid to take the risk of issuing a mandatory letter to the faithful, for if they had done so, and the vote had gone contrary to their instructions, it would have been a loss of prestige that the Church would never have recovered in Quebec." So Cardinal Begin and Archbishop Bruches it allowed the Church to remain neutral and the people to vote as they chose, with the result that on April 10th last the beer and wine referendum was carried in Quebec by an overwhelming majority.

And so we became the largest "wet" area in North America, and one of the Hearst papers not long ago had the audacity to refer to Montreal as "the booze capital of the continent; the Mecca of the thirsty, towards which thousands of booze pilgrims from American and Canadian cities, within a radius of 1,000 miles, journey every week." Since May 1st it is illegal to have a bar in Quebec, and beer and wine are the only liquors authorized for beverage purposes—beer of a strength of 2.51 per cent. by weight alcohol, equal to 5.50 per cent. proof spirits. Cider and wine may legally contain 6.94 per cent. by weight alcohol, equal to 15 per cent. proof spirits. These liquors are not "temperance drinks," but intoxicating. The beer is more than five times the strengh of the beer under prohibition in the U. S. The word "light," therefore, as applied to beer and wine in Quebec is a delusion and a snare.

Nearly five months have now passed since Quebec embarked upon her perilous course, so the time has arrived for inquiring as to results, and weighing in the balance this "Act to Provide for the Prohibition of the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors and to amend the Quebec License Law in certain cases." I have a copy of the law before me, secured from Mr. Boisseau of the Inland Revenue Office, the day I called upon him, and have given it some study. Let us see what it means. Twenty-five vendors have been appointed by the Government to sell intoxicating liquors, such as whiskey and brandy, under dictir's license. Twelve of these vendors are in Montreal, one in Sherbrooke, one in St. Hyacinthe, one in Three Rivers, and so on. Quebec City is still under the Scott Act, which, I hear, is not working well. The law says, "The words 'authorized vendor' mean a person authorized by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to keep for sale and sell such wines as are required exclusively sacramental purposes, and such intoxicating liquors as are required for exclusively medicinal, mechanical, industrial, scientific or artistic purposes, in accordance with and as permitted by the Quebec Prohibition Law." The law also says that any person "guilty of an infraction of the Quebec prohibition Law shall be liable, in addition to the payment of costs for the first offence, to a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than three hundred dollars, and, in default of payment of such fine and costs, to imprisonment in the common jail for three months; for a second offence, to a fine of not less than three hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, and, in default of such fine and costs, to imprisonment for three months; and, if he is a licensee, to the forfeiture of his license in the discretion of the court; and for a third or any subsequent offence, to imprisonment for not less than three months nor more than six months, in the discretion of the court, without option of a fine."

We have now 250 beer and wine cafes in Montreal and 350 grocers' licenses, so it will be seen that we are still fairly well supplied with the means of quenching thirst. The "Licensed to sell spirituous liquors," still decorates many of the doorways of the saloons; but such a sign is now illegal, and an abortive effort was recently made by the police to have all these signs removed, but they seemed to get weary before their work was done.

Imagine an immense farm kitchen, with hardwood floor, and a few cheap pictures on the walls. Place twenty-five or thirty plain round tables within the kitchen, with four chair at each. Then picture forty or fifty men at these tables, with flowing mugs of beer before them; poorly-dressed, dirty-looking men, who look as though they should be spending their little money in food and clothing rather than drink. This is a fairly accurate picture of a cafe as I saw it on St. Antoine Street a few days ago.

One of the perils of our present position is that municipalities under local option are rapidly voting themselves "wet" again, so as to come under the beer and wine law; for instance, Lachine, which by hard-fought contests was won for temperance, has now rejoined the wets. On the other hand, the municipality of St. Rose recently voted to remain "dry." It was also stated in the press, August 27th, that the town of Levis just across the river from Quebec, would repeal its present prohibition law; so it really looks as if the temperance work of many years will be undone. That there is no warrant for reliance on the new law is amply demonstrated by such reports as the following, which appeared in the Star a short while ago. "There were forty-three cases of drunk, or drunk with disorderly conduct, on the list of the Recorder's Court this morning." Another day in August we were informed that " a formidable list of thirty-seven charges of drunkenness in various degrees confronted the Recorder this morning."

In order to clarify the matter by official information, I called on Chief Belanger at police headquarters a few days ago. He was interested in the fact of Ontario voting on the referendum on Oct. 20th, and frankly told me that in his opinion the beer and wine law in Quebec is a failure. "We have more drunks, more commitments and more trouble than we had before," said the Chief, in his frank, decisive way. "The law might not be a bad one if it were enforced, but the vendors are not observing the law. They are supposed to sell only on a doctor's prescription, but they are not confining themselves to that." The chief then called an assistant, who gave me the following official report for July and August, 1918, and july and August, 1919, as taken from the police records. Comment is superfluous.

MONTREAL POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Extract from statistics for the month of July, 1918, and July, 1919.

Males

Offence	1918	1919
Disturbing the peace	48	54
Drunk,	426	432
Drunk and disorderly	23	43
Drunk in charge of automobile	6	9
Drunk in charge of vehicle	8	10
Non-support	35	17
Selling liquor without a license	6	21

Females

Disturbing the peace	5	1
Drunk	33	24
Drunk and disorderly	4	4
Non-support	—	1
Selling liquor without a license	2	3

Extracts from statistics for the month of August, 1918 and August, 1919.

Males.

Offence	1918	1919
Disturbing the peace	26	38
Drunk	380	516
Drunk and disorderly	28	48
Drunk in charge of an automobile	7	9
Drunk in charge of a vehicle	15	10
Non-support	43	23
Selling liquor without license	4	17
Females		
Disturbing the peace	8	1
Drunk	32	9
Drunk and disorderly	8	23
Non-support	2	—
Selling liquor without license	6	6

In the endeavor to present the case fairly to the readers, I wrote Hon. Walter Mitchell, Provincial Treasurer, asking him for statistics in regard to the working out of the new license law. He was kind enough to telegraph me, authorizing a visit to Mr. J. W. Lewis, Government Inspector of Vendors, 61 St. Gabriel street. I called on Mr. Lewis, and was very cordially received. He is a former Bank of Montreal man, and last winter did some expert work on the staff of the Fuel Controller. Mr. Lewis showed me a room full of confiscated hard liquor, and several drawers containing confiscated bogus doctors' certificates to vendors. He told me that he had a squad of inspectors and spotters at work all the time, and hoped to have the law better observed in the near future. Mr. Lewis states that although not a total abstainer he is in favor of temperance, and that it is his inflexible intention to enforce the law as it appears on the statute books. He says he has not a political friend and has been given a free hand in all his efforts to bring the new law into effect—that is, he is not hampered in any way by political influence. When asked how to account for the drunks that we see daily on our streets, Mr. Lewis said that he knew some of the vendors were not observing the law, and he was tightening the cords around them all the time, but it could not be done all at once. He pleaded for delay before passing judgment, and I came away convinced that he is confronted with a big job, which he is trying conscientiously to work out; but the system is wrong from the foundation! As an example of his difficulties, there are 1,800 doctors issuing certificates to vendors, and Mr. Lewis proposes to have a facsimile made of each doctor's signature, so that his inspectors may more easily detect false, forged and bogus certificates. I am informed that in some vendors' places these certificates are lying loose on the counter, to be filled up by anyone, with anyone's name attached.

At two leading banks on St. James Street I was informed that savings are increasing in the most gratifying manner, but they found it difficult to say whether it was due to the new license law or not. At the City and District Savings Bank the manager was inclined to think that increased savings was due to fear of the future in these troublous times, and to the campaign of advertising that the banks have carried on at the requets of the Government, enjoining thrift.

When I asked the attorney of the Anti-Liquor League to state his opinion of the beer and wine law he said emphatically, "It is being flagrantly broken every day. I can point you to saloons on the east side of the city that are open on Sunday, where no attempt is made to observe the law. And I can show you hotels where the bar is still in existence, four months after the passing of a law to abolish it." In refering to the Anti-Liquor League, I wish to add that I am greatly indebted to Mr. R. Luther Werry, secretary of the League, and also connected with the Montreal Star, for valuable suggestions as to best sources of information in preparing this article.

Passing through the doorway of the Old Brewery Mission, with its inspiring inscription in great white letters, "Pardon, Peace, Power, Plenty," a beacon light to thousands of hopeless men, I asked Mr. Guthrie, the assistant superintendent, to give me his experience of the working of the beer and wine law. "We get fewer drinks," he said, "but they are far worse. Beer makes a beast of a man, because it soaks him through and through. We used to be able to sober our men up in twenty-four hours; now it takes three or four days, because the liquor is doped. The returned soldiers come in here night after night doped and minus all their money and their papers. You can dope liquor with cigar ashes or with scrapings of the thumb nail. It is done so that the soldier may be robbed with impunity. This saloon next door to us, I know, does business on Sunday, and the police know it, for I see them going in there very frequently themselves to telephone."

At the Salvation Army Metropole on St. Alexander Street, the poor man's hotel, I enquired of Capt. Pride how things were going and whether his burdens were any less under the new law. He was just then attending to a poor, besotted fellow, who was craving a night's lodging. "This is an example of what the beer and wine law fails to accomplish," he said significantly.

"I am an old soldier and a former policeman," continued Capt. Pride, as we chatted in his office. "I lost my position as policeman in a Nova Scotia town because I enforced the temperance law too rigidly to suit certain parties. I confess I have no sympathy with drunks, and I must say that we have fewer of them to deal with now than prior to May last—but still too many."

Welcome Hall Mission, on St Antoine Street, surrounded by cafes, saloons and second-rate hotels, has been for years a clearing house for hundreds of unfortunate victims of that most despotic of all monarchs—King Alcohol. Mr. and Mrs. Fraser in charge of the mission are known far and wide for their humanitarian work. "Watchman, what of the night in this great city—are the clouds lowering or are they breaking?" I asked.

"I think fewer women now call me to their homes to assist them in dealing with drunken husbands," said Mr. Fraser. After some further conversation we adjourned to the assembly hall of the mission, where Mr. and Mrs. Fraser held a gospel meeting, the address being on divine healing, in which they both beleive ardently. Two poor, reeling victims of the saloon came in and tried to interrupt the meeting. The hours for selling are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Montreal, Sept. 24th, 1919.

Obituary

JOHN MILTON PLATT

John Milton Platt was a native of the county of Prince Edward, having been born in the township of Athol four score years ago. His early life was spent at home on the farm. His education was acquired under the limitations of those early days, and it is a tribute to his abilities and energies that he emerged from such conditions with the qualifications of a school teacher. After teaching for a time his good work found recognition in his appointment as Public School Inspector. Later he turned to journalism and published a paper in Picton known as the "New Nation". The physician's calling had attracted him, and finally he gave up everything else to pursue the studies necessary to qualify him as a medical practitioner. In due time he was established in Picton, a physician and surgeon of good repute.

Dr. Platt had too much public sentiment, and was too much concerned with public questions to confine himself to the routine of professional life. In the early eighties he was a member of the House of Commons, having been elected thereto by the vote of his fellow citizens in this county. He was of a philosophic frame of mind, a man of good judgment, calm deliberation, strong conviction, able by voice or pen to impress his ideas upon the people. These qualities made him not only popular on the public platform, but a valuable addition to the debating power and the committee work of Parliament. In 1899 he was appointed Warden of the Provincial Penitentiary at Kingston, which position he continued to fill until failing health compelled his retirement in 1913. Since then he has lived in Picton, his activities being more and more restricted by growing infirmities. These later years were spent in domestic happiness, fellowship with friends, and quiet waiting for the Messenger whose call came unheralded on the morning of September 27th.

It is as a physician that Dr. Platt will be best remembered. He added to a knowledge and skill in which he was well abreast of the times, the kindness of a tender and sympathetic heart. He went far beyond the bounds of mere professionalism in attention to his patients. There are hundreds still living who remember with gratitude his services in their homes.

A profound respect for citizenship such as was represented in the life and work of the deceased brought together a large and reverent company for the funeral which was conducted by Rev. Alfred Brown, interment taking place in Glenwood cemetery.—Picton Gazette.

Laid to Rest

LATE W. J. HUDSON

Mr. and Mrs. Stagg, of Brockville are in the city attending the funeral of the late W. J. Hudson, whose remains arrived here today from Ottawa, where he passed away. The Rev. A. S. Kerr, of St. Andrew's Church conducted the last sad rites. Interment was made in Belleville cemetery.

LATE MARIE R. BARRIAGE

The remains of the late Marie Rosalie Barriage were taken today to Kingston for interment.

There are more thorns than roses on the path that leads to a woman's heart.

The smaller a man's mind, the longer it takes him to make it up.

Lake of the Woods Very Prosperous

Net Earnings for 12 Months Ending August 31 placed at $756,616

Montreal, Oct. 4.—Net profits of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company, Limited for the twelve months ending August 31 last, according to the financial statement submitted to the shareholders at their annual meeting, amounted to $756,616, a decline of $101,298, of 11.8 per cent. from the total reported for the previous year's operations, but $136,369 in excess of those for the twelve months period ending August 31, 1917.

After the payment of dividends on the common stock at the rate of ten per cent. per annum, together with a bonus of two per cent. and an additional dividend of two per cent from the arnings of the Sunset subsidiary, there remained a balance of 303,616, compared with $446,914 last year, and $245,747 the preceding year.

BIRTH

VANCE— At Belleville, Wednesday, Oct. 1st to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Vance, a son.

The Expenditure of $610,000,000

How the last Victory Loan was spent

BEFORE buying Victory Bonds again you may want to know how Canada used the money you loaned her last year

Canada borrowed the money to carry on the war and to provide credits for Great Britain and our Allies

CONSIDERABLY more than one-half of the Victory Loan 1918 was spent on our soldiers This included $312,900,000 for paying them feeding them bringing them home separation allowances to their dependents maintenance of medical services and vocational training schools

For Demobilization

$59,000,000 of the Victory Loan 1918 was paid on account of authorized Soldiers' gratuities

$9,000,000 was spent at Halifax for relief and reconstruction after the disaster

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Other disbursements were not strictly speaking expenditures but National Re-investments

For Trade Extension

To Great Britain for example

$173,500,000 was loaned for the purchase of our wheat and cereals

$9,000,000 for our fish

$30,000,000 for other Foodstuffs

$2,900,000 for Canadian built ships

$5,500,000 to pay other British obligations in Canada

Making in all $220,900,000 advanced to Great Britain

To our Allies, we loaned $8,200,000 for the purchase of Canadian foodstuffs raw material and manufactured products

The Re-investments will be paid back to Canada in due time with interest

These credits were absolutely necessary to secure the orders for Canada because cash purchases were impossible

They have had the effect of tremendously helping agricultural and industrial workers to tide over the depression that would have followed the Armistice had we not made these credit loans

As far as money is concerned 1919 has been and is still—just as much a war year as 1918 Our main expenditures for war cannot be completed until well on into 1920 Thus another Victory Loan is necessary—*Get ready to buy.*

Victory Loan 1919

"Every Dollar Spent in Canada"

Issued by Canada's Victory Loan Committee in co-operation with the Minister of Finance of the Dominion of Canada.

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