

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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MR. KING'S BROADCAST

In his broadcast of Wednesday night, the Prime Minister of Canada made a very strong appeal for temperance on the part of the Canadian people in these critical times. The liquor problem, serious enough in peace time, can and does become a definite menace during a war.

Mr. King, while admitting that the pressure of events at such a time as this may be considered to be an incitement to excess, made it quite clear that he has no illusions concerning the whole situation.

Our war effort is clearly being affected by excessive drinking. Absenteeism and economic inefficiency are recognizably due to it. Accidents in workshops and factories; defects in guns and ships, and a general breakdown of morale can readily be attributed to the same source. Yet, reckoning by dollar value, which, Mr. King properly admitted is not an exact equation, because of the increase in taxation, the expenditure on liquor in Canada has practically doubled.

Mr. King's appeal was not for prohibition, but for temperance, an appeal, not to force, but to sound common sense. At the same time, he pointed out that the Government has powers of compulsion. These have been put into force in many fields—in respect to travel, to gasoline and rubber, and even to the disposition of the man-power of the country. To permit the unrestricted sale of liquor therefore, when this actually undermines the efficiency of the national effort, is simply illogical.

In respect to Government policy, Mr. King announced a scheme which combines some compulsion and a great deal of persuasion. The reduction in the proof content of spirits and in the total quantity of liquors of all sorts to be released from bond is all to the good. Best of all, however, was his appeal to the good sense and devotion to duty of all right-thinking Canadians.

Here Mr. King touched on the core of the whole matter. So long as public opinion is on the side of drinking, the intemperance will flourish. It is public opinion that will, more than anything else, make excess in respect to liquor, or anything else, "bad form." In appealing to this public opinion the Prime Minister made it practically unavoidable that Canadians take the right side. "No one will deny," he declared, "that the excessive use of alcohol would do more than any other single factor to make impossible a total war effort." If an ap-

peal of such strength and validity from such a source goes unanswered, nothing can remain but that the Government use its power to impose still sterner legislation on the whole matter.