

# REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THE EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE.

The Select Committee appointed to inquire whether any, and what, Legislative measures can be adopted to repress the evils growing out of Intemperance, have agreed to make the following Report, dated March, 1849:—

Intemperance leads to crime, to insanity, to pauperism. One-half of the crime annually committed, two-thirds of the cases of insanity, three-fourths of the pauperism, are ascribable to intemperance. No other form of words would have been sufficiently comprehensive to express the deliberate convictions of Your Committee. Having thus in the outset tendered their own testimony, Your Committee would remark that, without incurring enormous expense, they could not have procured the attendance of witnesses from a distance. They have, consequently, examined none but persons residing or sojourning upon the spot. Your Committee will, therefore, present to Your Honorable House a picture—certainly not an over-charged picture—of the condition of the City of Montreal in relation to the subject of intemperance. Every individual Member will have it in his power to compare the state of his own neighborhood with that of this city, and to form his own conclusions. For the purpose of this reference, too, it may be justly assumed, that the parties who have presented the several petitions referred to Your Committee, are witnesses in every respect worthy of credit. They amount to several thousands from every section of United Canada, and it is to be presumed that they have been moved to appeal to Your Honorable House by evils affecting their own respective localities. While, therefore, the Petitioners will, no doubt, be able to make a beneficial application of the facts elicited and recorded by Your Committee, the latter are entitled to submit the contents of the Petitions as a description of evidence—as evidence, at least, of the actual extent of the mischief caused by intemperance. The subject is one beyond the reach of pecuniary interest, or of the influence of passion, fear, favor, or affection. Had every individual petitioner appeared in person before Your Committee as a witness, that act would have conferred no additional solemnity on the statements made in the several Petitions, nor would those statements have been more credible. Accordingly, Your Committee have deemed it expedient to submit not only an abstract of the evidence taken by themselves, but a digest of the said several petitions.

## Evidence of Capt. Wiley, Chief of Police.

In Montreal, the total number of offences in 1847,...	4039
Cases arising from Intemperance,.....	2234
Total in 1848, .....	3524
From Intemperance, .....	2001
Total for the last two years,.....	7563
From Intemperance,.....	4235
Upwards of four-sevenths of the whole.	

Last year, in St. Ann's Ward, there were fifty-four houses in which liquor was sold without license. There cannot be less than three hundred houses in this City in which liquor is so sold.

## Mr. McGinn, Gaoler.

Total number of Prisoners committed to Gaol during the year 1848,.....	1462
Arising from Intemperance,.....	907
Making nine-fourteenths of the whole.	

The witness adds, that this is strictly exact as regards both sexes.

## Benjamin Delisle, Esq., High Constable.

Number of unlicensed taverns in Montreal, about .....	460
Houses of ill-fame in which liquor is sold without license,...	100
Licensed Taverns,.....	314
Grocers licensed to sell by retail, .....	69
Total,.....	883

There is a general leaning, even in the breasts of magistrates, in favor of persons accused of selling without license; they generally escape—to obtain convictions is next to impossible—witnesses are systematically intimidated, or bribed, threatened, and spirited away.

## Messrs. Stewart & Ryan, Revenue Inspectors.

To feed these seminaries of vice and crime, there were distilled in the District of Montreal, of the most rectified spirit, in 1848, 608,450 gallons.

It is worthy of notice, that the Inspectors have no kind of check upon the distillers, and the quantity smuggled cannot be estimated. It seems to follow, that the consumption of ardent spirit exceeds that quantity, but by how much cannot be ascertained.

## The Collector of Customs, Montreal.

The quantity of spirituous liquors entered at the Port of Montreal for home consumption in the year 1848, is as follows:—

Brandy, .....	66,101 gallons.
Geneva, .....	46,502 "
Whisky, .....	514 "
Rum, .....	24,944 "
Sweetened Liquors, ..	266 "

Total entered,.....	138,247 "
Total distilled, (as above) 608,450 "	

Grand Total,..... 746,697 "

## The Collector of Customs at the Port of Quebec.

The quantity of spirituous liquors imported, and duty paid, at this port during the last year, was 81,275 gallons.

## The Coroners for the District of Montreal.

In 530 inquests, 53 of the deaths (one in every ten) were traced directly and immediately to intemperance. Many more are believed to be ascribable to that cause; but jurors being reluctant to return verdicts of death by intemperance, the exact number cannot be accurately ascertained, or positively stated.

## Dr. Campbell.

The usual diseases directly induced by the protracted and excessive use of alcoholic drinks, are irritation of stomach and bowels, vomiting, diarrhoea, scirrhus of the stomach, jaundice, hardening and enlargement of the liver, disease of the kidney, dropsy, congestion of the brain, delirium tremens, and insanity.

According to the "British and Foreign Medical Review, four-fifths of the entire amount of crime is the very least proportion we can assign to those that are committed in Great Britain under the direct or indirect influence of intoxicating liquors.

In a communication to the Government, Mr. Sheriff Thomas expressed himself as follows: "I am warranted in laying it down as an incontrovertible fact, that crime is, in this portion of the globe, almost entirely engendered by dissolute habits: four-fifths, I might perhaps correctly say nine tenths, of the cases which call for the interference of our Criminal Courts, are connected directly or indirectly with drunken habits."

## Dr. Sewell.

Nothing can be more fallacious or fatal than the common notion that spirits invigorate: "On the contrary, they render the body more susceptible of fatigue, less able to resist the effect of severe cold and intense heat, and more open to the invasion of contagion. Protracted and severe bodily exertion cannot be so well sustained with as without the use of ardent spirits." But that pernicious article of traffic is not merely sold, it is adulterated with divers ingredients, all more or less deleterious. Opium is occasionally employed for that purpose. Cocculus indicus and oil of vitriol are also used.

Men in the vigor of life and health have thus been mysteriously, as it was thought, called to their account. They have been said to have committed no excess, they have merely indulged, and upon the instant they have dropped down dead. But most of those sudden deaths could be traced to the original adulteration of liquor. In a full cask, the poison, somewhat diluted, would not instantly destroy life; in its concentrated state, at the bottom of the nearly empty vessel, it must instantaneously prove fatal.

From mistaken motives, licenses are frequently granted to worthy members of society, who, having met with reverses, are unable to follow their usual pursuits. The objects of that sympathy, however, become but too frequently its victims; for innkeepers, so far from enriching themselves, are too often contaminated by their calling, and they and their families, engrafted