

WHERE LOCAL OPTION HAS TO WORK UNDER DIFFICULTIES

"Ontario" Scribe Visits the Thriving Village of Tweed Where They Have Troubles of Their Own Because of Licenses in Near-by Villages—But Tweed is Sober, Contented and Abundantly Prosperous and Nobody Talks of Restoring Licenses.

If you have heard any wild rumors lately that the speed limit is being recklessly trifled with on the Bay of Quinte railway, do not believe a word. All such reports arise out of a spirit of malice and a desire to injure business by preventing the timid from travelling by this route.

Arriving at Yarker by the Toronto-Ottawa express of the Canadian Northern line, we changed over to the Bay of Quinte route and mounted the Cannonball Limited for Tweed. We left Yarker at 4.30 p.m. and arrived at Tweed at 7.50 p.m. the same day. The distance is thirty-five miles.

Travelling by rail at ten and a fraction miles an hour is surely "going some," but we most emphatically deny that it is a hair-raising experience. We found it only mildly stimulating. It affords us great pleasure to state that we have at last discovered a railway with which "Safety First" is something more than an idle formality.

As we stopped at Stoco, a man came into the first-class coach who had apparently been quenching a horrible thirst with the satisfying liquid that is still dispensed in that enterprising burg. After a prolonged search he produced his ticket and sent the conductor on his way. Then he settled himself at ease and brought forth a capacious black pipe and started to light it. He was politely informed by an athletic-looking gentleman, who was seated beside a lady, that smoking in the first-class coach was prohibited by the rules and regulations. But the thirsty one never noticing the protest went on and lighted his nicotine and soon all the ladies seated about were bathed in the beautiful, aureo-tinted haze. Upon arriving at Tweed he left the train and disappeared with uncertain strides amid the friendly gloom of a convenient side-street.

This was the second occasion upon our tour that we have seen an intoxicated man within the limits of a local option municipality. The other exhibition was somewhat similar. A gentleman from Rawdon, who had tarried too long over the flowing bowl, entrained at Belleville station and detained at Stirling, as we also journeyed there to test the degree of aridity. Both celebrants, we believe, escaped the eagle eye of the minions of the law.

Tweed is Exceedingly Prosperous.

A tour through the business section of Tweed and the sight of the well-stocked stores, with salesmen everywhere busily filling orders and waiting on customers, and then a walk about the residential section where fine, commodious homes are conspicuously in evidence, with palatial cleanliness, and thrift on every side, and not a "To Let" sign in the whole corporation—the sight of all this tells to the most casual observer its own forcible and undeniable story of a population that is taking pride in the town, that is saving money and getting ahead in the world. Whatever may be the reason, Tweed is doing well. This place may be suffering from drought, but it is certainly not suffering from depression.

No Talk of Local Option Repeal.

Tweed passed the local option by-law in January, 1908. There were just seven votes to the good when the Three-Fifths demand was satisfied. Five years later those in favor of license brought on a contest for repeal. Local option was sustained by a slightly increased majority. It would be possible under the statute to bring on another contest in January next. But the man who now seriously proposed repeal in Tweed might escape with his life, but he would run the risk of being locked up as a man of questionable sanity. Three years ago it was different. There were then many vacant houses in the town. The Powder Company had moved away and the lumber business died out. But now these homes are all filled again and prosperity reigns.

Tweed Has Had Troubles of Its Own.

For those who wish to remain perennially pickled Tweed is no longer a hospitable home. This fact will presently be brought out in the evidence of its leading citizens. But if the desire is merely to become sporadically apiticated the proposition is very easy.

At Stoco there is still a licensed and well equipped dispensary.

The distance from Tweed by carriage road or railway is only six miles. But by going across the lake by launch in

summer or by ice in winter, the searcher for cold tea, has to travel only three miles. Then at Actinolite, or Bridgewater, as everybody still persists in calling it, there is another thriving boozarium and only five miles away. If these were both closed, as the deputation requested the Provincial Board of License Commissioners to do at Tuesday's conference, it would add to the difficulties of those to conviviality inclined by increasing the distance, but there would still be bars at Marlbank and Madoc. Distance imposes no barrier if only the thirst be severe enough. But it may be accepted as a fact that requires no demonstration that every mile you interpose between the drinker and the bottle lessens the chance of the two coming in contact.

Town Financially in Excellent Shape.

Mr. S. B. Rollins is not only the chief magistrate but he also supplies his town with the staff of life. He conducts a model bakery and does a big business with Tweed and the country surrounding.

Our town is in excellent financial shape, said the reeve as we found him in his office busily assisting in the preparation of the accounts to be presented at the statutory meeting of the council on Wednesday.

"Our debt is only \$9,259 while the assessed valuation of our property is \$554,323. Our population has increased until it stands at 1313, according to the assessor's returns. The tax rate is 26 mills this year which is 5 1/2 mills greater than it was a year ago. The increase was largely due to the special provincial patriotic tax, and the levy for a field kitchen presented to the 80th battalion. There is not a vacant house or store in the town.

"As to drunkenness," continued Mr. Rollins, "I do not believe there is one now in five under license. Conditions have greatly improved. I do not know that any liquor is being sold in Tweed. If there is any business along that line, it is done very quietly. I know personally of many whose financial condition has improved and who are now able to meet their accounts promptly owing to local option. There is absolutely no talk of repeal. Our hotel accommodation is splendid. I never hear any complaints on that score from travellers. One of our hotels was said to have had greater receipts this year on fair day than it ever had under license. Our town is in a good, flourishing condition. Our total bill for charity last year was only three dollars. There are no poor people in Tweed."

No Trouble on Account of Drunkenness.

"We now have no trouble at our works on account of drunkenness," said Councillor James Murray, the superintendent of the Tweed Steel Trough and Machine Company, a corporation whose products are known all over the Dominion. "We have had no cases of intoxication among all our men for more than a year now. There has been a great improvement in regard to sobriety."

Five Cases of Drunkenness.

Dr. Bowlby, ex-reeve of the town, now discharges the duties of magistrate. He talked to us very interestingly of his experiences with local option and of past experiences when he was a member of the county council.

"We have had but few convictions for drunkenness this year," said the doctor. "I think not more than five. This number is somewhat less than it was a year ago. There was one charge laid this year for having liquor in possession, but a conviction was not secured. I don't think there is much liquor sold in the town. Business here is good. Conditions have improved under local option. We used to have drunken brawls quite often but these are now unknown."

I did not favor local option," the doctor continued, "and I don't know as I am altogether in favor of it yet. If you do the same amount of work to enforce the license law it is perhaps nearly as good."

Local Option Too Local for Tweed.

"The trouble is," Dr. Bowlby remarked, "that local option is altogether too local for Tweed. It is too easy to go to Stoco and Bridgewater. There is a certain class who

will have it if it is convenient but who not go very far for it, say to Belleville. This same class would not be likely to have it shipped in for they wouldn't have the money to pay for it in advance."

Trade Will Not Leave Good Town.

Ex-reeve Mr. J. W. Shaw conducts an up-to-date grocery and provision store. He said, "I wouldn't want to go back to license. We now have a clean town, practically free from drunkenness and free from vice. I have seen both the advantages and the disadvantages of local option, but the advantages are so much greater that I would be decidedly opposed to making a change. The liquor business has got to go. Local option has driven no farm trade away. The people around here are not so degenerated that they will leave a good town to chase after booze."

Mr. Zed Lafontaine, editor and publisher of The Tweed Advocate was seen but asked to be excused from making any statement.

Treating Abolished.

Mr. W. W. Garrett, the village clerk and until recently manager for the firm of Wm. Garrett & Sons, said they had been told that local option would ruin business, but he had answered that if his business was propped up by whiskey he was willing to quit. He didn't see a drunk now, once a month. The treating system was abolished. The young men were not learning to drink. There was some liquor brought into the town though not much. A man can't be boozing much without showing it. Tweed was prosperous. The comparative prosperity of some of the villages around, where they still had licenses showed the difference.

Mr. James Quinn conducts the largest general store in Tweed and one of the largest in the County of Hastings. He is a very keen-witted business man with a rich accent that shows he is a true son of Hibernia. Just at the time of our visit he was more interested in the delivery of some bales of hay than he was in discussing the merits and demerits of local option.

When we finally succeeded in attracting his attention he made some rapid-fire comments in his characteristic manner.

"Local option? O yes, and so you're going to try it down in Belleville? Well local option would be all right if we had it all over. I think the government should take hold of it the way they have done out in Saskatchewan. No, I don't know of any farm trade that has left the village. I see very little drunkenness—almost none in fact. But then Tweed always was orderly and law-abiding."

And just then some new kink arose in the delivery of the hay and Mr. Quinn abruptly ended the interview.

Business Good in Tweed.

That business was good in Tweed was the evidence of Mr. D. Morrison, who conducts a large general store. "Sometimes I think local option is a benefit," said Mr. Morrison, "at other times I think it an injury. Perhaps there are some farmers who have gone to Madoc because of local option at Tweed, but on the other hand there are others I believe who have come to do their trading at Tweed for the same reason."

Mr. William Collins who also has a fine general store and shelves filled with bright, new goods said that business was good, and that he did not see drunkenness to any extent, but as he did not arrive in the town until after the passage of local option he could draw no comparison between that and the license system.

Tweed Now a Model Village.

One of the most popular men in Tweed is Mr. Thos. McCann who deals in real estate and insurance. Mr. McCann was clerk of the court at Tweed for 25 years, license commissioner for East Hastings for a long period, and justice of the peace until the coming of Whitney made a clean sweep of all Grit office holders. Mr. McCann for ten years conducted a wholesale liquor store at Tweed. He admitted that he did upon certain occasions get keyed up a bit when he used to be out with "the boys."

When we asked Mr. McCann his opinion about the stirring question of the hour, he said, "To put it in a nutshell, my impression is that local option has been an improvement. There is less drunkenness. I haven't seen a drunken man in weeks. We used sometimes to see under license intoxicated men on Sunday. Whatever else I was I always liked to see the Sabbath day respected."

"Tweed has become one of the most model and moral towns in Ontario since local option passed.

"It was estimated that in the year before local option passed, the hotels and the liquor store at Tweed took in \$56,000. That went into the hands of half-a-dozen men. A large part of the money that was spent in that way is now distributed in general trade over the town."

Ninety-Five Per Cent. of Cases Traceable to Liquor.

Mr. P. K. Newton, druggist, was for 15 years the leading magistrate at Tweed. During the term of his magistracy licenses were in force. Mr. Newton expressed the opinion to our representative that 95 per cent. of all the cases that came before him were traceable to liquor. He went on to say that as a druggist he didn't sell a gallon of liquor in six months. Now More Quiet Around the Hotels.

"It is now more quiet around the hotels," said Mr. J. C. Frost who has for many years conducted a successful furniture and undertaking business at Tweed. "There is now no disorder on Saturday night. There are no losers. As far as I can hear every merchant is doing a better business than before."

Greater Satisfaction.

Mr. A. C. Barnett has the largest grocery in Tweed and has a general store in connection. It is easy to see he is doing a successful business. At the time of our visit he scarcely had time to pause from the work of filling orders to answer our queries. He considered it a great improvement. The town had improved in many ways. Collections were better. There was greater satisfaction in dealing with a sober, thrifty population. They were never bothered with drunken men any more.

Moral and Business Conditions Better.

F. A. Bartlett who has a large and prosperous drug store regarded local option as an advantage from a business standpoint. He was satisfied that both the moral and the business conditions of the town were better under local option. He thought some farm trade was driven away at first for the hotel-keepers charged for shed accommodation, but that was changed when the temperance people took over one of the hotels.

The whole question was one of enforcement. Where all the people were unwilling to complain of infractions of the law. While local option was not all he would desire he certainly did not wish to go back to license.

Trade Better Than in 1914.

Mr. C. F. Fawcett, who has one of the largest and best equipped hardware stores in the district thought personally that local option had been an improvement. Farm trade had not been injured in any way. He heard some complaints about tax enforcement and there was undoubtedly some liquor brought in in bottles, but there was less drunkenness and less drinking. Trade conditions were very satisfactory. His own business showed a fine increase over 1914.

Decided Improvement.

Mr. R. F. Houston, president of the Tweed board of trade, ex-reeve of the village, president of the Houston Company Ltd., builders, contractors, and manufacturers of sashes, doors and interior fittings etc., and the largest employers of labor in Tweed, said that the best evidence that he liked local option was that he voted for it twice. Conditions in regard to sobriety were decidedly improved. He didn't see drunks very often, but there were a few floating in from Stoco and Bridgewater. Business conditions in the village were excellent, but much of his city trade had dropped off owing to inactivity in building. On the whole local option was a success but there were some things that were not satisfactory.

Nicer Doing Business Now.

Mr. F. S. Rath combines the hardware and crockery business and carries a large and well assorted stock in both departments. "I find it is much nicer to do business under local option," said Mr. Rath. "When a man buys anything now he knows what he is doing and doesn't come back in a day or two to have us change or take back the goods on the plea that he was drunk. I don't know of a single farmer whose trade has been taken away on account of local option, but I do know of farmers who now come and pay cash for goods who wouldn't be likely to pay if we had licenses."

Former Licensed Hotel Keeper's Opinion.

During our stay at Tweed we stop-

ped at the Queen's. This hotel is owned by a company of temperance sympathisers in Tweed, but is rented out to Mr. James Roberts. We found everything clean and sanitary about the hotel. The meals are very nicely prepared and served. The rooms are well carpeted, and the beds very comfortable. The rates are fifty cents a meal and two dollars a day.

"I have been in the hotel business all my life," said Mr. Roberts to The Ontario. My father kept hotel before me. Two years ago I sold out a licensed house and have since been in the temperance hotel business. I like the temperance hotel as it is cleaner and more orderly. I believe the barless hotel is bound to come. Ontario will soon all be dry. I am well satisfied with the business at Tweed. I try to accommodate and please the travelling public and am glad of the increasing patronage that is coming my way."

Where Fifty Cents is not Fifty Cents.

When we stated above that the price for meals at Tweed is fifty cents we asserted what is true, but still the statement is somewhat misleading. We ascertained that in practically every town we have been in the charge for meals at the better hotels was fifty cents. But we also learned that in nearly all the hotels in the smaller towns, whether under local option or license, while commercial men and travellers generally have to put up half a dollar, the honest farmer gets his for thirty-five cents. This is the case at Tweed.

We do not know the cause for this invidious distinction, but offer this as a plausible explanation.

Farming is no longer the strenuous occupation it once was. The agriculturist, with electricity, gasoline engines, automobiles, milking machines and a host of other labor-saving weapons, no longer has to do any real work. Farming has become a sort of joy ride, a pleasant pastime. Through lack of exercise therefore the yeoman now has a very precarious appetite. For him to consume fifty cents' worth of food at a single sitting is out of the question. A job of those dimensions can only be accomplished by the robust commercial man. Hence the discrimination in rates. Once you understand the circumstances it looks very reasonable. Although we were brought up on a farm, and look like a farmer and dress like a farmer, and talk like a farmer, and would rather have a farmer's job than anything else we could name, we have never once during this thirteen-hundred-mile tour been able to get a meal at the agricultural out-rate of thirty-five cents. We have invariably been entered among the heavy-draughts and charged full traffic rates. Probably the keen-visioned bonifaces sized up the bill according to the broads we made on the commissariat.

Notes.

Tweed has a chief of police who also performs the duties of tax collector and truant officer and sanitary inspector. This makes the problem for maintenance not a burdensome one for a village municipality.

Through a chapter of accidents we failed to secure an interview with Chief Molyneux.

License Inspector Stokes was in Belleville attending the meeting of the Commission. We therefore did not see him.

We called to see Mr. Sandy Grant M.P.P. but he was out.

Lack of time did not permit us to see others of the business men, much as we would like to have done so.

Tweed is considering the installation of an ambitious waterworks and fire-protection system.

Tweed has in The Advocate one of the brightest and newest weekly papers in Ontario.

The News is also a creditable paper with large circulation.

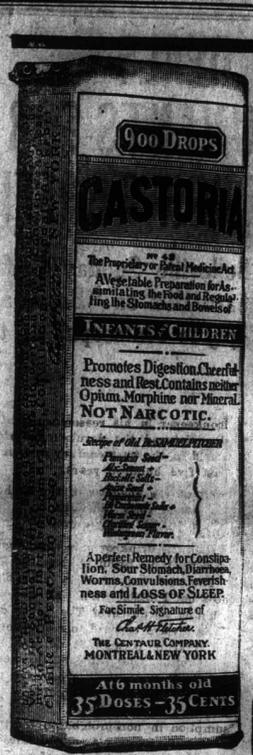
Tweed's situation, with the expanse of lake and river and the Laurentian hills surrounding, is a most charming one.

A somewhat broken, though rich and prosperous agricultural and dairying district surrounds.

Tweed's real growth dated from the arrival of the railways, the C.P. and the B. of Q. It is now an important shipping center, particularly for cheese and live stock.

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Mr. and Mrs. W. Broadworth and Mr. and Mrs. John Farrell of Stirling were guests at Jas. Bailey's, Moira Street on Wednesday.



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