Plebiscite Series—No. 3.

Direct Cost of the Liquor Traffic

THE Royal Commission made an estimate based on the average annual consumption of liquor for five years, ending 1893. Excluding cider and native wines, and taking an average of the retail prices, the calculation shows that the sum of $39,879,854 is paid annually by consumers of liquor in Canada.

The money thus paid may be fairly said to represent so much diminution of wealth, as the liquor when consumed, leaves the community in no way advantaged. When money is paid for clothing, food, or other commodities, the purchaser is supposed to have value for his outlay. Both buyer and seller respectively possess wealth formerly held by the other.

The liquor seller possesses the wealth formerly held by his customer, but the customer consumer has nothing. The community is poorer to the extent of the money spent for the liquor. The annual expenditure for liquor, therefore, may be regarded as so much direct loss to the country, The amount of grain used in the manufacture of this liquor also represents valuable material destroyed. Part of it was Canadian grain which, had it not been used in liquor-making, would have been available for export or other use. Part of it was imported grain for which the money had to go out of the country. All the grain destroyed in the liquor manufacture has a right to a place in the calculation of loss. The Commission's estimate of the value of the materials used is $1,189,765, of which $203,423 is paid for imported articles. These figures show only the direct loss in the purchasing transaction, the money paid by the purchasers of liquors for which they have no equivalent, and the value of the grain, etc., diverted from useful purposes.

From "Facts of the Case."

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