

GOVERNMENT SALE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

(One of a series of twenty articles following impartial investigation of government sale of liquor as practised in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec.)

UNPOPULAR B.C. LIQUOR LAW
ALMOST KILLS GOVERNMENT

Oliver's Party Suffers Near Defeat As Result of Law Forced Upon Them When Public Shows Resentment Against Conditions Following Government Sale.

POLICE HEAD WARNS AGAINST SYSTEM

ARTICLE NO. 15.

British Columbia has a new Conservative leader in the person of R. H. Pooley, a lawyer practicing in Victoria, but representing the provincial riding of Esquimalt. I conversed with Mr. Pooley in his office.

Mr. Pooley is successor to Mr. Bowser in the Conservative leadership. The general impression here is that with another leader than Mr. Bowser the Conservatives would have carried the province last June. But many Conservatives who did not like Mr. Bowser went into the formation of a new party, called the Provincial party, which only elected three members but seriously split the vote. As it was the government had a close call and both the premier and Mr. Bowser were defeated.

The association with liquor interests which the people's vote for government control forced upon the Oliver party is blamed for the government's decline. Temperance people say that anyone who has any regard for the good of his own party will keep it away from the government control system.

The new Conservative leader explained to me that he had been against his party when it had supported prohibition. He was sorry to say that politics had crept into the enforcement of the government control law and that present conditions were bad. He cited the case of a scow tied up to the government wharf at Prince Rupert, to which some 40 fishing craft moored at one time when he was there. Liquor was openly sold on the wharf. Fishermen were "rolled" before they got ashore. While he looked on, a fight between several tipy men had occurred on the scow. He had raised the matter in the legislature and the government acted. But things were going on now as before.

Eighteen "Shabeens."

In his own riding of Esquimalt 18 "shabeens" or bootleggers got their supplies from one brewery and had hundreds of customers. Local authorities failed to move and the provincial police stepped in. That showed that the government could not take shelter behind the municipal police and blame non-enforcement on them. It could act in any place where the law was not being enforced and could charge the cost up to the municipality.

Mr. Pooley mentioned three places close to his office where bootlegging went on in spite of government control. He said many drinking men were willing to pay a little more to the bootlegger if they could have sociability along with their liquor. He denied the truth of government contentions that the delivery of beer was monopolized by the government. He said that someone would arrange with the government to get a barrel of beer. The government store would phone the brewery, which in turn would notify the customer. And the customer might tell the brewery to increase the order to two or three barrels. Only one barrel would appear on the records, although the government had inspectors on the job. None of the beer supplied by the 18 Esquimalt bootleggers appeared on the records.

The Conservative leader declared that during the recent Nelson by-election, in which Premier Oliver had secured a seat, several ministers had gone into the riding, and the liquor law had been violated on all sides, government members being among the offenders.

Mr. Pooley has long condemned the use of stool pigeons by the government in seeking convictions, which continues under the government control law, as formerly under prohibition.

Anglican Clergyman's View.

I heard many opinions, pro and con, about government control in British Columbia, but none more interesting than that of an Anglican clergyman, Rev. A. H. Sovereign, of St. Mark's church.

Mr. Sovereign is a young looking and vigorous man, almost belying the fact that he has been longer in harness in Vancouver than any other minister. He has been working there for eighteen years, and this year was honored by his brethren of all denominations by being chosen as president of the ministerial association of Greater Vancouver. He has intact a cultured English accent. His reputation is that of a broad-gauged man, not given to fanaticism, who would judge on its merits any system of dealing with the liquor problem that might be tried. Here is the verdict of Mr. Sovereign:

"The system is simply not working; it is not controlling. Bootlegging is very prevalent. The debauchery in the hotels, where women and liquor are taken, is terrible and the hotels and police cannot stop it. Men who only want a liquor and soda are compelled by the system to buy a whole quart of liquor and take

it home. Bootlegging is worse than it was under prohibition. "The government has located a liquor store for the Chinese in the Chinese section. It has located another one for sale to loggers, miners and fishermen. Anytime the loggers' boat is about to pull out from the Union Steamships' wharf, drunken men lie around on all sides. On one occasion out of more than 100 loggers going north on the steamer only two were sober."

Had to Guard Girls.

"Three weeks ago I brought back from the north a lot of girls who had been attending a girls' camp. There were so many drunken men around the Union Steamships' wharf that I simply had to stay on the job to save the girls from molestation."

"The export warehouses are largely to blame for the conditions, for they supply the illicit trade. Attorney-General Manson told the ministers that there was no holding the brewers; that they paid no attention to anything but a big club."

"Personally, I would like to see continental prohibition tried for a ten-year period to see whether that is not the best method available. Until now prohibition has not had a fair trial."

Government Controller Talks.

The task of controlling the sale of liquor in British Columbia is largely in the hands of Chairman A. Johnson of the liquor control board, with headquarters in Victoria. He is a man who flashes a ready answer to any question.

"What is your greatest difficulty in enforcing the law?" I asked.

"Bootlegging," he replied. "Why do men go to the bootlegger when it is so easy to get good liquor from the government?" "They want conviviality and sociability, and will go behind a grocery store, a candy counter or into some dive to get it. They also like to do the thing that is forbidden. It's more than the liquor they want."

"Does that suggest that Quebec has the best system of government control?" "No, it's all a matter of nationality, temperament, environment. Quebec is French and used to that sort of thing. What may suit Quebec may be all wrong for Ontario or Alberta."

Mr. Johnson said Dr. Butler, the well-known American educationist, had been to see him and had said that he wanted to devise a really constructive liquor policy for the United States.

"I told him he had bitten off more than he could chew," observed Mr. Johnson. "That I wondered whether there was any solution or measure of a constructive tendency."

British Columbia's liquor control chairman is credited with saying that the brewers can't play fair, that "give the brewers a bung and they'll want a whole barrel. Open but a crack of a door and they'll push in and take possession of your whole house as they are doing in B. C."

Police Commissioner's Opinion.

I had an interesting talk with Robert (Sandy) McPherson, the new police commissioner in Vancouver, appointed by the government in response to the public demand for a clean-up. Many years ago he was a Labor member of the legislature, although he told me that he had been connected with the Liberal party during most of his 35 years in Vancouver. Mr. McPherson is a quiet-spoken man of character, with a Presbyterianian contempt for humbug.

When I told Mr. McPherson that Ontario was to vote on government control and that my mission was to find how the system into the new police commissioner's eye.

"There's no control about it," he declared. "You can buy all you want. Go to a government liquor office and you can get \$100 worth or more. It's not government control, but government sale."

"Is there much drunkenness?" "Quite a lot."

"How about the social evil in Vancouver?" "Bad."

"Would you advise Ontario to adopt government control as you have it in B. C.?" "I would not."

In interviews with local papers Mr. McPherson said a wave of crime was sweeping Vancouver, the city was wide open, bootlegging and disorderly houses flourished, and that some raids appeared to have been tipped off. Just before I reached Vancouver an Italian accused of bootlegging charged that police frequented his club and got free beer. Commissioner McPherson is agitating for a real clean-up. At his instigation the Vancouver police commission is urging that the long horse racing season be curtailed.

A Police Court Worker.

Major Cummins, the Salvation Army's police court worker in Vancouver, agrees with Commissioner McPherson that British Columbia has government sale, not government

"THE FIRST YEAR"
A LAUGH-MAKER

Grand Offers Comedy On Married Life—Its Troubles and Pleasures.

No theatre manager or critic could make a mistake in recommending Frank Craven's "The First Year," as the young husband and wife but a year married, the audience laughed and enjoyed itself immensely.

Not for years has such a merry, happy, laughter-compelling comedy as this been offered to London theatre-goers. From the first curtain to the lowering of the last, from the courting in the first act to the healing of the quarrel between the husband and wife in the third, the comedy produced by the same company which played the "First Year" for a year in New York, and the best that the theatre has to offer in its kind, is a play brought out. It's sly sallies are given their proper value, and it's undercurrent of dry philosophy is maintained throughout the three acts.

Real Love Working. It is the story of the courting and first year of married life of two youthful country swains. The husband is in the clever line, and the wife is a jolly, healthy chuckle in every line. It's as infectious as love in spring. It's the turning back of youth's happiest days, and turned by the mature fingers of a man who knows humanity from preface to finish. London has the benefit of having the comedy produced by the same company which played the "First Year" for a year in New York, and the best that the theatre has to offer in its kind, is a play brought out. It's sly sallies are given their proper value, and it's undercurrent of dry philosophy is maintained throughout the three acts.

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Half of the drinking men I met said the system of government control in B. C. was a good thing, but Quebec had the right system. But a number of prominent citizens who took an occasional glass and who expressed their opinions in confidence were dubious about the results of government sale or positively condemnatory of it as hurtful to business and good citizenship.

Members of the board of health will hold a special meeting next week and take up with City Engineer W. P. Near problems of sewage disposal and disposal of wastes from industrial plants. On the motion of Ald. L. H. Douglass, seconded by Ald. Jack Anderson, it was decided to discuss conditions with the engineer.

"Two or three were emptying directly into the river from the north side of Dundas street," Chairman C. Mitchell commented. "Some day we'll have something serious happen as a result. I was called up on the telephone and was told that the smell of raw sewage was something awful. It's bad at the foot of York street, too."

In his monthly report Dr. Downham, medical officer of health, called attention to the fact he had made on the river in September of 1923. The report had been taken up and sent on to number two committee of the board of health. The board's present last night were all of the opinion that early efforts should be made to cleanse the waters of the Thames.

To Re-Draft Plumbing Bylaw. On the motion of Alderman Douglass a recommendation was made that the city council hold a special meeting with the board in order to conclude re-drafting of the plumbing bylaw. A session of the two bodies and other interested folk was held last month but the bylaw was not completed. The health board is pressing that the plumbing status be put in shape before the 1924 council passes from power.

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54 Not Elderly
Judge Declares

A man is only as old as he feels, and sometimes not that ancient, W. B. Henderson, one of London's younger lawyers, considers that fifty-four is an elderly age, but His Lordship Mr. Justice Riddell does not believe it.

Bringing out evidence in a damage action at the courthouse yesterday afternoon, Mr. Henderson asked a witness if he could not see that the woman ahead of him was elderly.

"You can't judge these days," Mr. Henderson, reminded Jared Vining, counsel for defence. "I wouldn't call fifty-four elderly," declared his lordship, "and I don't think the jury men would either," he added, gazing at the bald head of one of the "twelve good men and true."

There has not been such a genuinely humorous comedy of married life written and played in many seasons. There's a jolly, healthy chuckle in every line. It's as infectious as love in spring. It's the turning back of youth's happiest days, and turned by the mature fingers of a man who knows humanity from preface to finish. London has the benefit of having the comedy produced by the same company which played the "First Year" for a year in New York, and the best that the theatre has to offer in its kind, is a play brought out. It's sly sallies are given their proper value, and it's undercurrent of dry philosophy is maintained throughout the three acts.

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LEW KELLY'S PUP
STILL ROLLS OVER

Roger and Dope Continue To Delight Burlesque Patrons.

Lew Kelly, the renowned "Dope" of burlesque, is at the Majestic Theatre for the first half of this week. With him is his faithful pup Roger and a burlesque company.

We mention the dog before the company for reasons of sentiment. We first saw this bound of the dope fiend's fertile imagination perform some 15 years ago. From time to time since we have seen him roll over and do his other little tricks, and so feel more or less attached to him.

There is no doubt that Mr. Kelly is one of the most original humorists in burlesque. His every word, gesture and facial expression shows how thoroughly he has mastered the role he has chosen. His imitations never get within grasping distance of his material.

Nor has he had to change his lines to hold his following. He still goes up in the balloon. He still drives a horse across the ocean. He still gets tired he gets out to walk. His imagination still soars. Roger still rolls over at the command of the master, and Lew Kelly still whispers secretly in his ear in order to teach a dog tricks one must know more than the dog.

The humor in the world and vague imaginings of Fuller Hoppas, as Kelly chooses to call himself, is not altogether in exaggeration. His stories are whoopers. They are wild ravings, but in among mental lapses are spread some shrewd observations that strike home.

In the scene entitled "Mrs. Johnson's Husband," Mr. Kelly and Miss Gertrude Lynch pass some snappy backyard gossip from one front porch to the other. A mock trial wherein Fuller Hoppas is on trial for murdering Truth carries a liberal measure of fun. A revival meeting, a travesty on giving testimony, was funny. In fact, every time Lew Kelly stopped into the scene, whether as a sailor or a racehorse track tout he had as many laughs as Kellar had cards.

Dot La Mont offers two good specialty turns. Her treatment of the rustic proved her a clever eccentric comedienne, while her scarecrow dance was one of the bright bits of the bill.

There is but one singer in the cast. She is a nameless but attractive girl who with her sister chorus girls opened the second act. She should graduate to a place among the principals at an early date, for the production needs a voice to strengthen it.

Our critics are experts. \$1.50 to \$2.00. We have Truism to fit all needs. ANDERSON & Co. 268 Dundas St. W. Phone 821.

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The Breadman

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