

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Office of
The Prime Minister

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Subject

Liquor Restrictions

In announcing further substantial curtailment of the supplies of alcoholic beverages Prime Minister King presented an unassailable argument. It is not a new argument, of course. It has been much in the mind of most Canadians for a long time. It is that the widespread, large-scale use of alcoholic drinks reduces the efficiency of the nation, just as over-indulgence lessens the efficiency of the individual, and uses manpower which otherwise would be devoted to essential war production. These, surely, are self-evident facts.

Mr. King presented his case for a reduced consumption of alcoholic beverages on this ground, buttressed by an appeal to the patriotic feelings of Canadians and their concern for national welfare instead of the usual emotional appeal based on personal welfare.

In recent months in the industrial parts of Canada alcoholic beverages have come into widespread and large-scale use. Their use has become over-indulgence, with consequent effects on the efficiency of many who work in war industries or whose work is connected with the war effort. And the extent of their use occupies a considerable number of potential war workers as well as others who would not qualify in direct war work.

Control of the sale of alcoholic beverages is a provincial matter; its production and importation is federal. Regulations set up by Ottawa in the past and now being set up by this new edict are concerned with production and importation, excepting in that the provinces are asked to cut down the hours of sale, a request to which, it may be assumed, they will respond.

One of the remarkable points in Mr. King's figures of sale is that the output of beer has increased by 60 percent

whereas wines have increased 25 percent and spirits 37 1-2 percent. When compiling these figures did Mr. King's informants remember that Canadian beer sales this past year have included large quantities sold to the British government for use abroad and consequently were not consumed by Canadians in Canada?

The reduction in supplies amounting to 10 percent for beer, 20 percent in the case of wines and 30 percent in the case of spirits is substantial and yet probably not so large as to bring about an outbreak of bootlegging and illicit manufacture. If there is any tendency in that direction it should be dealt with at once, and drastically, otherwise the position may become worse than it was before.

There has not been as yet in this war any widespread demand for complete prohibition. Experience has been a curb on that and there has been a strong desire to avoid a return of the bootleg era. It is not likely complete prohibition will be attempted if Canadians restrain themselves as they patriotically should. If they do not restrain themselves, then the country may be forced to more drastic measures. And it may be assumed, too, that when war necessity ceases many of the restrictions will be removed.

In that case, it would seem that this period of restriction could advantageously be accompanied by an educational campaign on the wise use of liquor.

One may assume that the decision to curtail liquor supplies, and not to encourage consumption, will be accepted by the nation as necessary because of the over-indulgence of what is, when one examines it, a comparatively small proportion of Canadians. The curtailment comes none too soon.