

Drugs in Relation to Prohibition

Mr. Carrick Replies to Mr. Wilkinson.

In the May issue of the B.C. Monthly there appears a communication from R. C. Wilkenon, Port Hammond criticising an article by the writer on the above subject.

With the customary christian charity which we now look for from the prohibition fanatic Mr. Wilkinson proceeds in his first paragraph to insinuate that the writer of the article, being opposed to prohibition must necessarily be interested in the liquor business, and being so cannot therefore be expected to make a truthful statement.

For Mr. Wilkinson's information it may be stated that the writer of the article has not now, nor ever has had, the slightest interest in the liquor traffic nor in a fairly long lifetime has he ever profited by that traffic to the extent of the value of one cent. On the contrary the advent of prohibition placed him in a position by which if he had cared to take advantage of it, as some prominent prohibition leaders have done, he could have turned it to his advantage to the extent of many thousands of dollars.

Of course it is too much to expect a disinterested prohibitionist like Mr. Wilkinson to accept such a statement from one of the unregenerates, but the proofs are at his command at any time.

Re Mr. Wilkinson's own statement. His first is that crime has disappeared and jails and penitentiaries are empty. Well! we have recently had an assize court in Vancouver at which it seemed to me that the calendar was one of the longest of any in recent years. On the same day that the B. C. Monthly appeared there was a prominent front-page article in the local press stating that in the city of Chicago, where so-called bone-dry prohibition has been in force for a considerable time, crime was increasing at such an alarming rate that four new judges had to be appointed to try murder cases alone, there being over one hundred such cases awaiting trial while new cases were arising at the rate of one murder per day for the city alone.

The city of London, England, has probably a population about four times that of Chicago and has not got prohibition. Will Mr. Wilkinson have us believe that there is more crime in London in proportion to population than there is in Chicago? Perhaps in his estimation murder is not a crime. Perhaps he only recognizes breaches of the Prohibition Act in that category. He tells us that druggists declare there is no increased demand for habit-forming drugs.

Did he find any statement in the article he criticises attributing the fostering of the drug habit to druggists?

The writer of the article has too high an opinion of the integrity of the men who are engaged in the legitimate drug trade to make any such statement.

Does Mr. Wilkinson overlook the periodical, one might almost say daily, captures by the police of illegally held stocks of habit-forming drugs in quantities that are away beyond the legitimate requirements of the whole of Canada?

In recent weeks the police have reported captures of cocaine and morphine amounting in one instance up to \$50,000 and many others running up to \$20,000. Mr. Wilkinson tells us that alcohol causes ten thousand deaths per year in Canada or at least is "estimated" to do so. Will he tell us also who is responsible for the "estimate"?

If Mr. Wilkinson will read the article over again he will find that there is no reference to Russia whatever nor is vodka ever mentioned. The writer of the article only wrote of what he knew by personal experience or from study of indisputable authorities.

Regarding the test referred to—the man who gave school children a glass of wine a day for such a purpose must have

been a fool or a criminal.

Did the critic find anything in the article in question advocating the giving of alcohol to children?

That article on :Drugs in relation to Prohibition, together with its predecessor on the prohibition muddle in B. C. was written with no view of forwarding any selfish interest, but was an honest endeavor to give the public the benefit of any little special knowledge the writer possessed. But it seems to be the fact that no man may venture to discuss any matter of public interest in Canada unless he is prepared to be the object of the vilest innuendo.

Is it any wonder that under such conditions there is so much corruption in the conduct of public affairs in our country or that our best citizens absolutely refuse to enter public life?



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