

CAN A FIRST-CLASS HOTEL BE MADE TO PAY IN A "DRY" TOWN?

That is the Question the People of Renfrew are Attempting to Answer—Hotel Renfrew, Costing \$66,000, is a Fine New Hostelry Where a Distinctively High Class Service is Given—Renfrew the Dryest Dry Town in Ontario—Town is Booming—200 New Houses Erected Since Local Option Was Passed—A Competent License Inspector—Interviews With Leading Business Men.

Can a first-class hotel be made to pay in a town where there are no licensed bars? That is the question the people of Renfrew have set themselves to answer. Their experience is most interesting and valuable.

The Ontario representative has just returned from a visit to Renfrew where he was domiciled for two days at the beautiful Hotel Renfrew, which now has been running twenty months and where travellers have frequently to be turned away because there is no longer room for their accommodation. Renfrew is a town of 4,181 population, according to the last census made by the assessor. This is about one-third of the population of Belleville. But, in addition to Hotel Renfrew, there are six other hotels, all of which appear to be doing a flourishing business. The town itself is a hive of industry with many factories and larger factories than we have at Belleville, and many of them running 24 hours a day.

No More "Kick and Push." Leaving Tweed at 1.08 p.m. by the Sharbot Lake route we reached that picturesque depot and transferred without any delay to the waiting express on the Kingston and Pembroke line, the K. & P. or "Kick and Push," as it was formerly styled by some of its admiring friends. But there is not so much kick-and-push about the route as there once was. The Canadian Pacific company has now acquired it, and, while it is still about as crooked as a corkscrew, as it ferrets out its tortuous course among the Laurentian hills, it has been equipped with heavy steel rails, plenty of ballast, modern engines and first-class passenger coaches. The fifty-seven mile journey from Sharbot Lake to Renfrew is accomplished in two hours and fifteen minutes, including stops at every station.

The railway is bordered for the most part by precipitous hills, which towards the north arise almost to the dignity of mountains.

The City and Folly Of It All.

Once these hills were clothed with magnificent pine forests. But, now, alas, the towering white pine has been succeeded by the stunted poplar. Here and there a lonesome barn, or a tenantless dwelling, tells a mel-

ancholy story of some settler who hoped to attain a competence by engaging in agriculture among these broken valleys.

The city and folly of it all! The folly of our government ever being so short-sighted as to open these inhospitable wastes to settlement. What a pity to have witnessed the slaughter and destruction of those wonderful forests of pine, which would, under even a rudimentary system of conservation, have been for this province an inexhaustible mine of wealth for all time to come. Canada has been prodigal in many ways, but in none more so than with the forests primeval. "What has posterity ever done for us?" was the question which the preceding generation asked as it sought to excuse its policy of reckless economic waste. "Posterity be hanged!" is still the dominating sentiment of much of our legislation and commercial practice. But we are digressing from the subject. We set out to discuss Renfrew and temperance hotels.

Where Business Ability Is Not Essential.

It will not provoke much argument when we say that it does not require a very high order of executive ability to make money by selling booze over a bar, where there is any sufficient volume of business. The profits are large and certain. There is little waste. There are no accumulations of shelf-worn goods or dead stock. Highly skilled salesmanship is not required.

A Complicated Business. On the other hand it does require very special executive and administrative ability to manage in a satisfactory manner a business so complicated in its various details as a modern first-class hotel, minus the bar.

Where His Treasure Is.

Advocates of local option contend, with much show of reason, that where there is a license the hotelkeeper concentrates his attention on the bar. That is where the easy money is, and he allows the dining and dormitory service to run in any slipshod fashion, as an irksome load to carry in connection with the more lucrative bar.

On the other hand the licensed victualler claims that the kitchen and

dining room are not of themselves self-sustaining. That he gives a much better service because he diverts to them much of the profits that he derives from the barroom.

Both May Be Right.

Perhaps both are right. Many licensed hotels, which have a big bar trade, maintain dining rooms that are worse than that. In others it may be that the proprietors are losing money, not so much because excessive value is given, as because there is no careful and business-like oversight of labor, purchases, elimination of waste, etc., such as is absolutely necessary in a factory or store.

In brief, the bar attracts because profits are large and easily made; the dining room is an undesirable partner because it means eternal vigilance and no end of trouble to secure anything more than an even break or to prevent a serious loss.

Crowded Conditions.

"Excuse me, sir, but we have no room we can give you now," said the courteous office boy at Hotel Renfrew as he took possession of our grip. "We will have one for you tonight." It was then five o'clock in the afternoon. At nine o'clock we were given a room.

It is now the off-season as far as commercial men are concerned, but still the Hotel Renfrew was crowded. Why? The answer is summed up in the single word, "Service."

There are six other hotels in this town of four thousand inhabitants, the same six as were doing business under license, and Hotel Renfrew is additional. For the past four months all of its forty rooms have been filled and often a dozen or twenty additional cots have been called into requisition.

The rates are two dollars and a half a day—fifty cents for meals and a dollar a day for room.

After testing its hospitality for two days, we can honestly say that there is no hotel within our experience where so much is given for your money as at Hotel Renfrew. We do not know of any hotel in Ontario so good for the price. There are extremely few that are better at any price. Travellers who know the province thoroughly say that Hotel Renfrew

is by all odds the best hostelry, licensed or unlicensed, in any town municipality in all Ontario.

Another Town Where "Hotel-Keepers Were To Blame."

Renfrew's hotels under license were said to be about the worst in Ontario. Travellers gave them a wide berth. A leading citizen said, "Until local option came into force, the hotels were treated merely as adjuncts to the barroom. The sale of liquor was the first consideration, and the accommodation of the public came after. The licensees obeyed and carried out the license laws only as far as they saw fit. Drunkenness was very prevalent."

Small Improvement.

Local option passed in 1910 by 3 1/2 votes over the Three-Fifths enactment. But the hotels remained principally in the hands of the former proprietors and there was small improvement in regard to the kind of accommodation offered. The booze and booze artists were gradually eliminated but the fourth-rate hotels remained. Repeat came up three years later and in that campaign those favorable to local option promised if the by-law were sustained, they would do something to remedy an intolerable hotel situation.

Local option was endorsed the second time by practically the same majority as before, and then the temperance people set out to implement their promise. Hotel Renfrew is the outcome.

A Company Formed.

The Renfrew Hotel Company was organized and Mr. W. E. Smallfield, publisher of The Mercury, and the present mayor of the town, was elected president.

A beautiful building, three stories in height, was erected at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. One hundred and fifty citizens became shareholders

was made. Notwithstanding that it was the first year of operation, with a change of management, and five months of war panic thrown in, the shareholders were surprised, and gratified to learn that the company had earned a dividend of four per cent. on the entire capitalization of \$66,000. Everybody was jubilant.

The accounts for 1915 are of course not yet complete, but it is believed with the increasing patronage and uniform management that a much higher dividend will be declared.

In any event the people of Renfrew know they have a high-class hotel of which everybody is proud, and they also believe they have a paying investment. They have in Hotel Renfrew a business asset for their town that is advertising it all over eastern Canada.

A Capable Manager.

The company was fortunate in securing for manager Mr. J. E. Colson, who for five years was manager of the Highland Inn, Algonquin Park.

All the intricate details about the entire establishment are looked after by Mr. Colson in a manner that seems to show that nothing, however unimportant, has been overlooked. The chronic grudge cannot find anything to grumble about. There is everywhere well ordered system, refinement, restfulness, quiet, cleanliness, efficiency.

"I have never managed a licensed hotel and never want to," said Mr. Colson to The Ontario. "I do not see why the sale of liquor should be combined with the feeding and housing of guests. Liquor always breeds disorder and creates conditions that are repulsive to people of refined tastes. If we must have liquor sold I think the Americans have the best method in selling in saloons where ladies do not have to go. We keep a very small bar here, equipped with soft drinks, more as an accommodation for our guests. There is a con-

dition, and thus capital is protected and encouraged to develop further industrial undertakings."

Thirty Arrests for Intoxication.

The nearest license to Renfrew is at Portage du Fort, Quebec, about 12 miles away. There are others at Eganville, Arnprior and Pembroke at distances varying from 20 to 30 miles and a frequent train service to each. It is not therefore at all surprising that some considerable jags are occasionally carried back to Renfrew.

Chief J. O. Plaut informed our reporter that he had during the present year made a total of 30 arrests for drunkenness. Last year the total was 25. And he is very strict about making arrests when there is any evidence of intoxication.

"The by-law is working out first rate," said Chief Plaut. "I haven't any trouble to keep order. I have one assistant on the force. There was a good deal of bottle drinking the first year or two after local option passed, but that appears to have died out altogether. There has not been a case of a boy being drunk the past year. We have had no fights or brawls for two or three years. We have had no cases of illegal sale or keeping for sale this year. It is hard to sell liquor here without getting caught. We make the drunken ones tell where they procured the liquor. There is no doubt about the improvement of our town under local option. I consider it a great success. We have no trouble at all with the hundreds of new workers now coming to the town."

Mr. Matthew Devine, Renfrew's efficient police magistrate, owing to his judicial position objected to giving an opinion any further than to state that he would frankly say that local option had been the opposite of failure in Renfrew.

A Grit Inspector.

Soon after that terrible Tory land-

ten per cent. of the liquor consumed here that there was under license. We have had no cases of illegal sale for three years. There is not so much perjury as there was under license. "Our hotels are one hundred per cent. better than they were under license. We have here the only hotel in the district where meals are given at 25 cents. We have no trouble at all about drinking among boys."

A Good Thing for Renfrew.

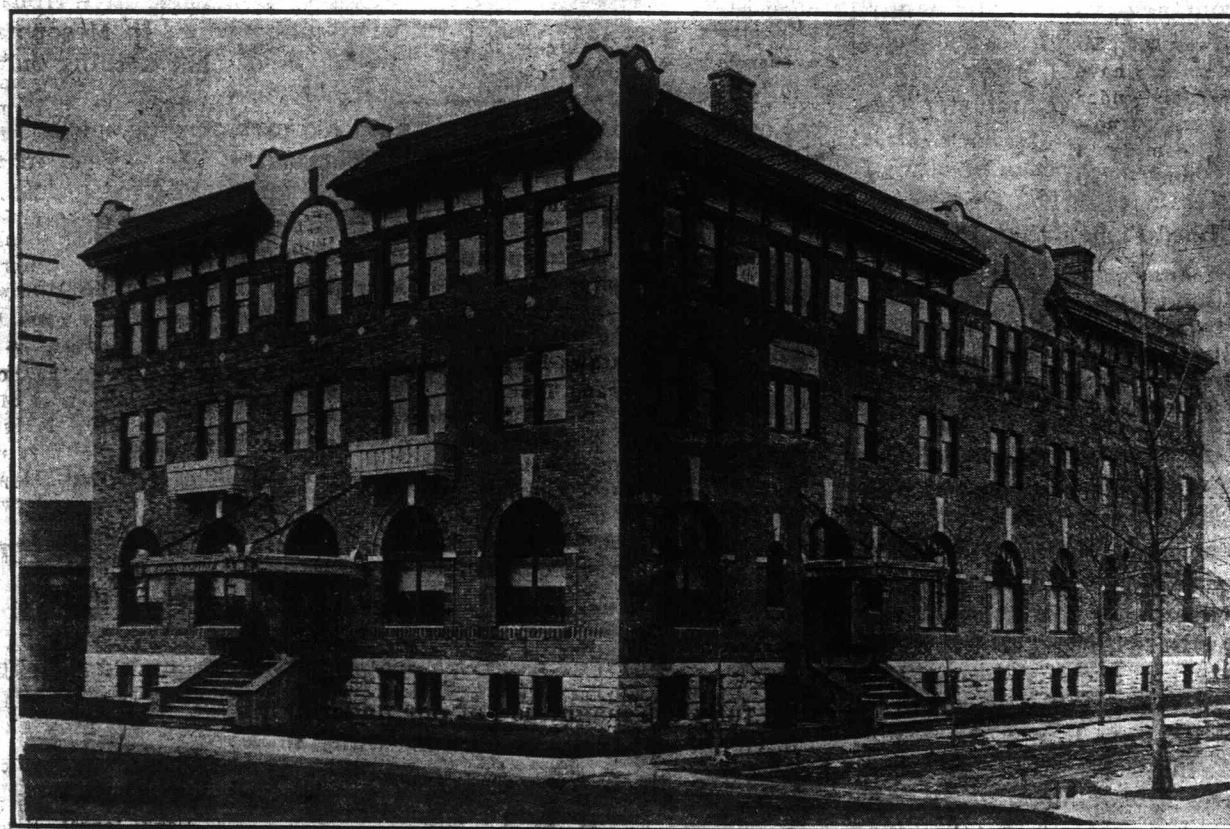
Our next interview was with Mr. Isaac E. Pedlow, who conducts the largest exclusively dry-goods store in the town, and is recognized as one of the shrewdest business men in the district.

"I was opposed to local option at first," said Mr. Pedlow, as he courteously put aside the opening of his morning correspondence and received The Ontario representative. "I was opposed to it purely as a business proposition. I feared that since other neighboring towns did not have it that trade would be driven to them. But I am now prepared to admit that it has done Renfrew no harm. On the whole it has been a good thing. Trade conditions are excellent. As far as our own business is concerned returns are even better than they were in the bumper year of 1913. There is not a vacant house or store in the town and the boarding houses are all filled to overflowing. Much of our prosperity is due to the establishment of new industries, but business is really better. I cherished no animosity towards those who said bitter things against me because of my attitude in opposing local option, but I swung in with them and was one of the strongest promoters of our fine hotel. I occasionally see a drunk man and there is some bottle drinking, but the outward effects are not visible to any extent."

The Opinions of Four Druggists. Renfrew has four up-to-date drug stores, and our omnipresent reporter

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HOTEL RENFREW, RENFREW, ONT.



Renfrew's New Bar-less Hotel—"The Hotel of Health and Comfort"—"Erected by the Citizens of Renfrew that the Town's Reputation for Hospitality and Progressiveness might be Upheld."

About Christmas Shopping

Our Store will be Open Every Night This Week until 10 o'clock—Christmas eve, until midnight.

We advise our city friends as far as possible to shop in the morning

We are very careful about Parcels—Any left in our charge will be delivered at the time and place—just to suit you.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Oak Hall

in sums from \$7,500 down to \$25. The building is located in the center of the business section on a site that cost \$5,000. Equipment cost another \$10,000. The total as it stands today represents an investment of \$66,000.

Opened April 1, 1914.

On April 1, 1914, the hotel was completed and the opening took place. The building embodies all the latest ideas in hotel construction that were practical for a house at the cost mentioned. There is a spacious rotunda, gentlemen's reading room, and a beautiful dining-room. Forty large airy bedrooms are provided and each bedroom is supplied with hot and cold running water. The heating is by steam radiators of the latest design, and so arranged that the guest can regulate his room to any temperature he desires from mid-summer heat to midwinter cold, and no arid chorus when the heat is first turned on in the morning.

Massive brass bedsteads are provided with resilient sanitary mattresses. There are comfortable upholstered arm chairs for each room.

The dining room is brilliantly illuminated with ponderous chandeliers of graceful design. A bevy of young ladies, all clad in spotless white uniforms look after the wants of the guests. The service and the quality of the food supplied are of a high order. Whether tips are given or withheld the service does not vary.

Four Per Cent. Dividend.

At the end of the year 1914, after the hotel had been in operation for nine months, the accounts were made up. The shareholders would have been amply satisfied if they had broken even. For the first five months they had a manager whose work did not prove satisfactory, and at the first of September a change

siderable demand in the summer. But I have no desire to handle the other class of goods."

Renfrew On The Boom.

Renfrew, like Orillia, has had the good sense to elect a newspaper man for mayor. Mr. W. E. Smallfield, publisher of The Renfrew Mercury, spent his earlier years at Madoc where his father came from the United States and established Madoc's first paper, The Madoc Mercury. After disposing of this Mr. Smallfield sr. moved to Renfrew, where he established another Mercury that is still going strong. His son, W. E. Smallfield, succeeded to the management in due course, and now the grandson, as expert job-printer, is also a partner in the firm. Mr. W. E. Smallfield is not only publisher of The Mercury, but he holds the highest office that Canadian journalism has to offer, the presidency of the Canadian Press Association. He has not only been honored abroad, but he passes current at one hundred per cent. in his own town. He has served about 20 years in the council and is now serving his fourth year as mayor.

"At least two hundred new houses have been built in Renfrew since we carried local option," said Mayor Smallfield to our representative. Our population has increased from 3,500 to 4,200. The town has carried out a \$200,000 power development scheme. We have installed one of the best "white way" and lighting systems in Canada, have built two \$40,000 schools and established several new industries. One of these promises to bring us 1,000 additional population next year.

"I don't claim that local option did all this, but it created a condition viewed favorably by capitalists. There are no 'blue Mondays' here. With sober workmen the week through the plants can run steadily and to

slide, or avalanche, or whatever you like to call it, overtook the Liberal party in Ontario in January 1915, the head of every Grit license inspector dropped into the basket—with one exception. That shining exception was John Connolly, inspector for South Renfrew. And he is still holding down the job. Grit and Irish and a lot of other undesirable things though he is, we doubt if there is a man woman or child in the entire constituency who would say, "It is time for a change." He is on the job every minute, and all the aggregate wealth of the would-be law-breakers of Ontario wouldn't cause him to swerve from the path of duty and honor the fraction of an inch. That is why he still holds his position, although he was appointed 25 years ago by the administration of honest Oliver Mowat.

The Greatest Blessing.

"Local Option is the greatest blessing that ever struck the town," said Inspector Connolly as we found him at his comfortable suburban home. We now have more hotel accommodation and better accommodation than we ever had before. The old hotels are now better kept and we have besides our new hotel which is the best in any town in the province.

"There is no similarity now with old conditions. We could easily see the benefit in six months after local option passed. I am treasurer of a couple of fraternal societies and I know of several cases where the wives had to go out to wash to help pay the insurance. These men have now sobered up and their wives no longer need to go to work. You couldn't get a hundred men in Renfrew now to vote for repeal.

The Dryest Dry Town.

"Renfrew is admitted to be the dryest dry town in Ontario. There is not

saw the proprietors of each.

Mr. W. B. Clark, who conducts a very large and fine establishment expressed himself as follows,—"Local option is working out well. I wouldn't want to see the bars restored. The trade that went to other towns because of booze, wouldn't be worth much anyway. I don't think there is any illegal sale. I don't even hear any suspicions of it."

Mr. D. J. Ritza, the next druggist we saw had been in business in Renfrew eight years, and each year had shown a fine increase in business. It was a rare thing to see a drunken man but when one was seen everybody took notice.

Mr. R. F. Fraser of Fraser and Smart, druggists, stated that he was not a crank on the subject, but there had been a great improvement in regard to sobriety. They had a splendid inspector who looked well after law enforcement. There was some drinking among boys at first, but he heard of none now. He thought the boys had been encouraged by some older ones in order to discredit local option. Business never was better.

Mr. W. A. Cameron, druggist, and stationer said that local option had worked out to the entire satisfaction of all sane people. For one thing they wouldn't have had a high-class hotel if it had not been for local option. People came to his store and paid cash, where they used to say, "charge this." Business was excellent. Renfrew never felt the effects of the war. There was no talk of repeal, although a vote might be brought on this year. "Our homes are a great deal happier than they were under license."

A. E. Leach, grocer said that business was good and local option was working out all right.

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(Continued from Page 6)

The Cleanest Town.

We found Mr. Logan, general manager of the machinery company, a score of accountants are looking for a business that over Canada, and Canadian firms have invaded the United States. The company employs its works in many Standard Cream Scales and Gasoline. "Labor Conditions improved," said Mr. Logan, "but I am now prepared to admit that it has done Renfrew no harm. On the whole it has been a good thing. Trade conditions are excellent. As far as our own business is concerned returns are even better than they were in the bumper year of 1913. There is not a vacant house or store in the town and the boarding houses are all filled to overflowing. Much of our prosperity is due to the establishment of new industries, but business is really better. I cherished no animosity towards those who said bitter things against me because of my attitude in opposing local option, but I swung in with them and was one of the strongest promoters of our fine hotel. I occasionally see a drunk man and there is some bottle drinking, but the outward effects are not visible to any extent."

Only One. Mr. W. T. Gue, Renfrew Flour Mill, such well known the "White Star," and "Elect" said, "There as far as Renfrew proved conditions of the town we ever had."

In the V. "You may be a but I'm afraid I'm," was the as his, manager of the Company to our working of local sured him that w sides of the story, prior of one of stores when local "I don't regard great benefit," w his expressed hima had more drinks license, but I be about as much h to the town as so much beer."

No Experiment B. "Local option Renfrew but is were the words Logan, manager ting Company, w employed, to exp doration. "It is ever happened to tined, "I used to and I felt that lo sist me. I also t tion was a good Logan it would o others. I know who were scar

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