

I think it would be well to go back a little in connection with the history of licensing, especially in Great Britain. The object of liquor laws is to check the evils arising from the immoderate use of liquor in the interest of morality and public order. We might well ask what gave rise to the necessity of there being any law to regulate the sale of liquor or what created that demand for a law. There are two or three things which we might mention. The more refined people got the more they saw the necessity of checking a thing that was evil. Medical influence had something to do with it, and the growing attention paid to health. One of the causes that prompted the making of license laws was the suffering and want and awful waste that followed in the trail of the liquor business. The evil resulting from the excessive use of alcoholic liquors is greater in colder climates than in warm climates. The tendency to strong drink is greater in northern Europe than in southern Europe, and, to the shame of some of us, the tendency towards strong drink of the people who inhabit the British Isles, English, Irish, and Scotch, is more marked than in almost any other nationality on the face of the earth. I do not like to say that, because there is a good deal of English blood in my veins, but it is the fact, nevertheless. In 1551 and 1552 licenses in England could be obtained only through two justices of the peace. The evil which it was sought to remedy was not only excessive drinking, but idling and disorder. The Act seems to have been of some effect, for no further legislation was enacted for fifty years. Here is something that the hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Weichel) would do well to take into account when he is talking of the virtue of the liquor traffic. In 1732 the city of London had a population of 750,000. It contained 95,988 houses, and of these, 15,236 houses were licensed for the retail sale of liquor, or one out of every six houses had a license to sell liquor. The debauchery, the idleness, the vice, the squalor in the city of London at that time is described by those who wrote on the subject as something terrible. A duty of five shillings a gallon was placed on the distiller under the law and the retailer paid £20 a year for a license to sell. In 1736 high license was tried, but it was found to be a failure. And these Acts, and the amendments to them, clearly recognize the connection between public disorder and public houses.

and that connection has been close from that day to this. Those older public houses were ale houses, where fermented liquors were consumed. Spirits had not come into general use as that time, and wine could be consumed under this law only by the aristocrat and the wealthy man.

There are four ways of regulating the liquor traffic: First, by license, which is the oldest and most widely adopted method; secondly, the Scandinavian system, which is not carried on for private profit. That system was adopted to remove the temptation to excessive drinking and the profits from it, if any, go to the State. The third is by State monopoly. Under the system of State monopoly, the State controls the business and gets all the profit. That is the system which was in operation in Russia, and that is why it was so easy to enact prohibition in that country. The control of the liquor traffic was not in the hands of the people; hence, when the statesmen of Russia came to the conclusion that prohibition would be in the interests of country, all they had to do was to enact legislation of that kind without any reference whatever to the people who were so subservient to the powers that be that they readily and quietly obeyed the law. The fourth way of dealing with the liquor traffic is by prohibition, which may be general, or local.

In the discussion which has taken place here to-day, it would seem that almost everything that could be said on this question had been said. The economic side of the problem has been fully treated both by the mover and seconder of the resolution, and it would seem that scarcely anything further could be said without repetition. I shall endeavour to avoid repetition. The opinion based on experience of men in authority, not only in Great Britain but in United States and Canada, is that drink is a curse, and that it should be abolished; in other words that we should have prohibitory legislation. Sir Wilfred Lawson was authority for the statement that in Glasgow, the Lord Provost, during a certain number of weeks he had administered relief to the distressed in that city, had asked every applicant whether he was a teetotaler, and he found he had not one teetotaler coming before him for relief. Abraham Lincoln in his time said:

The most effectual remedy for the drink evil would be the passage of a law altogether abolishing the liquor traffic except for mechanical, chemical, medicinal and sacramental purposes.