

# REFERENCE PAPERS

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## LIQUOR AND BEER RATIONING IN CANADA

### Introduction:

In a radio broadcast of December 16, 1942, the Prime Minister detailed the situation pertaining at that time, in respect of liquor and beer consumption in Canada. He said:

"Since the outbreak of war, there has been in our country a steady increase in the consumption of spirits, wine and beer. It is estimated that in dollar volume, the annual outlay is now practically double what it was before the war. . . .

In the twelve months immediately preceding the outbreak of war, the quantity of spirits, both domestic and imported, released for sale in Canada amounted to over three and a half million proof gallons. The corresponding figure for the third year of war was nearly five million proof gallons. This figure represents an increase of 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ %.

During the twelve months immediately preceding the outbreak of war, the amount of domestic wine made available for sale was just over three million gallons. In the third year of war, it was nearly four million gallons. This represents an increase of more than 25%.

The most reliable available index for increase in the consumption of beer is the increase in the use of malt for brewing. In the year prior to the outbreak of war, almost 140 million pounds of malt were used. The corresponding figure for the third year of war was over 232 million pounds. This represents an increase of over 60%."

The Prime Minister thereupon announced that legislative enactment had been made with a view to limiting the production and consumption of liquor and beer. This enactment is incorporated in P.C. 11374, dated December 16, 1942, cited as the "Wartime Alcoholic Beverages Order, 1942."

The Prime Minister said:

"By order-in-council under the War Measures Act approved by His Excellency the Governor General to-day, the government has taken further important steps to curtail substantially the distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages as a means towards achieving a total war effort. The Department of National Revenue has been directed to reduce the quantity of beverage alcohol, both domestically manufactured and imported, to be released from bond and made available for sale. The limitation is based on the quantities released for sale in the twelve-month period which began on November 1st, 1941. For the twelve-month period which began on November 1st of the present year, the quantity



"of beer is to be reduced by 10%; wine by 20%; and spirits by 30%.

Provision has also been made for a reduction in the alcoholic content of all distilled spirits to not greater than 30% under proof. This reduction in alcoholic content becomes effective as soon as stocks now packaged and ready for sale are exhausted.

The "fortification" of wine with distilled spirits is prohibited. The greatly increased consumption of alcoholic beverages is very largely a direct result of the increased purchasing power created by wartime expenditures. All the reasons for the curtailment in the production, distribution, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages apply to liquor advertising. Advertising is clearly not necessary to promote sales, nor is it justifiable if sales and consumption are to be curtailed.

The government has, therefore, decided to prohibit the advertising of spirituous liquors, wine and beer, throughout Canada, for the duration of the war. A period of some six weeks has been afforded within which necessary adjustments may be made. Liquor advertising will, however, not be permitted in any part of Canada after February 1st, 1943.

A word is now necessary on the relations of the dominion and provincial governments with respect to the production and sale of alcoholic beverages. The federal government has to do with their production and importation; the provincial governments with their sale and distribution. In other words, while the Dominion government is in a position to control the quantities of spirits, wine and beer to be released for consumption, the regulation of the retail sales of alcoholic beverages is a matter which is determined by each province according to its judgment. It is true that under the War Measures Act, where the demands of war so require, the Dominion has an over-riding jurisdiction in this as in other fields. The government has felt that it would not be justified in exercising this jurisdiction except in matters of actual necessity connected with the prosecution of the war. For this reason, the federal government has refrained up to the present from taking any action in this field which it was felt the provinces themselves might be expected to take.

An examination of existing wartime needs now makes it necessary for the federal government, in addition to the measures I have announced to appeal to the provinces for their co-operation in further restricting the sale of alcoholic beverages. It has already been found that the curtailment of hours of sale, in those provinces where the hours have been cut down, is automatically resulting in a reduction of consumption of alcoholic beverages with evident beneficial results to Canada's war effort. While each province is able to judge best of its own places of sale and hours of sale, the federal government is of the opinion that in the interest of Canada's war effort, the total number of hours to be allotted for sale of spirits, wine and beer, in any establishment where they may be sold, should not exceed 8 hours per day. On behalf of the federal government, I wish now publicly to appeal to the provinces to lend their co-operation in furthering our country's war effort by effecting at as early a date as may be possible this much needed restriction."

of beer is to be reduced by 10%; wine by 20%; and spirits by 30%.

Provision has also been made for a reduction in the alcoholic content of all distilled spirits to not greater than 80% under proof. This reduction in alcoholic content becomes effective as soon as stocks now packaged and ready for sale are exhausted.

The "fortification" of wine with distilled spirits is prohibited. The greatly increased consumption of alcoholic beverages is very largely a direct result of the increased purchasing power created by wartime expenditure. All the reasons for the excitement in the production, distribution, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages apply to liquor advertising. Advertising is clearly not necessary to promote sales, nor is it justifiable if sales and consumption are to be curtailed. The government has, therefore, decided to prohibit the advertising of spirituous liquors, wine and beer throughout Canada, for the duration of the war.

A period of some six weeks has been allowed within which necessary adjustments may be made. Liquor advertising will, however, not be permitted in any part of Canada after February 1st, 1918.

A word is now necessary on the relations of the Dominion and provincial governments with respect to the production and sale of alcoholic beverages. The federal government has to do with their production and importation; the provincial governments with their sale and distribution. In other words, while the Dominion government is in a position to control the quantity of spirits, wine and beer to be released for consumption, the regulation of the retail sale of alcoholic beverages is a matter which is determined by each province according to its judgment. It is true that under the War Revenue Act, where the demands of war so require, the Dominion has an overriding jurisdiction in this as in other fields. The government has felt that it would not be justified in exercising this jurisdiction except in cases of actual necessity connected with the prosecution of the war. For this reason, the federal government has refrained up to the present from taking any action in this field which would have left the provinces themselves to be expected to take.

An examination of existing wartime needs has shown it necessary for the federal government, in addition to the measures I have suggested, to appeal to the provinces for their co-operation in further restricting the sale of alcoholic beverages. It has already been said that the curtailment of hours of sale in those provinces where the hours have been cut, and the curtailment of advertising, is a reduction of consumption of alcoholic beverages with evident beneficial results to Canada's war effort. While each province is left to judge best of its own place of sale and hours of sale, the federal government is of the opinion that in the interest of Canada's war effort, the total number of hours to be allotted for sale of spirits, wine and beer, in any establishment where they may be sold, should not exceed 2 hours per day. On behalf of the federal government, I wish now publicly to appeal to the provinces to let their co-operation in furthering our country's war effort by allowing at an early date as may be possible this new needed restriction.

Summary of  
Existing  
Provisions

All but one of Canada's nine provinces now have some system of rationing or sales limit as regards the purchase of liquor and beer. The ninth, Prince Edward Island, has prohibition and is thereby not subject to provisions of a like nature to those pertaining in the other eight provinces.

A summary of the situation in the eight provinces where liquor and beer ration, or sales limit, provisions are now in operation, reveals the following:

Alberta:

Sales limits as of June 1, were: One 26-ounce bottle of spirits, and one of 26-ounce bottle of wine, and one dozen small beer, per month.

British  
Columbia:

Quotas for the month of June were: one pint of spirits, or two dozen pints malt liquor, or two bottles of imported wine, or one gallon of Canadian wine.

Manitoba:

Rationed quotas for the month of June were: 40 ounces of spirits, and one gallon of wine per calendar month with the stipulation that not more than three bottles of wine may be purchased in any calendar week; and two cases (48 pints) of beer per calendar month with the stipulation that not more than one case (24 pints) may be purchased in any calendar week.

New Brun-  
swick:

Quantities purchaseable during the month of June were: two 26-ounce bottles or four pints a month of spirits, the right to purchase the same ending with the calendar month if the quantity allowed is not completely taken up; and four quarts of wine, with the stipulation that only one half the monthly allowance may be procured at any one time; and one quart or two pints of beer in any one day, with the stipulation that a customer may take up the week's allowance at one time with the right lost to him at the end of the week. Only one commodity may be purchased in any one day.

Nova Scotia:

Quotas for the month of June were: 26 ounces of spirits; or four quarts of Canadian wine of one dollar value or under, or two quarts of imported wine; or two dozen quarts of beer.

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All but one of Canada's nine provinces now have some system of  
licensing or sales limit as regards the purchase of liquor and beer. The  
single province which has not, is the province of Ontario. It is  
provisionally of a like nature to those pertaining in the other eight  
provinces.

A summary of the situation in the eight provinces where liquor  
and beer ration, or sales limit, provisions are now in operation, reveals  
the following:

Sales limits are of three kinds: One 25-ounce bottle of spirits,  
and one of 25-ounce bottle of wine, and one dozen small beer, per month;  
Quotas for the month of June were: one pint of spirits, or two  
dozen pints malt liquor, or two bottles of imported wine, or one gallon  
of Canadian wine.

Rationed quotas for the month of June were: 50 ounces of spirits,  
and one gallon of wine per calendar month with the stipulation that not  
more than three bottles of wine may be purchased in any calendar week;  
and two cases (48 pints) of beer per calendar month with the stipulation  
that not more than one case (24 pints) may be purchased in any calendar week.

Quantities purchasable within the month of June were: two 25-ounce  
bottles or four pints a month of spirits, the right to purchase the same  
ending with the calendar month if the quantity allowed is not completely  
taken up; and four pints of wine, when the stipulation that only one half  
the monthly allowance may be purchased at any one time, and one quart or  
two pints of beer to any one day, with the stipulation that a purchaser may  
take up the weekly allowance at one time, the time limit being at the  
end of the week. Only one quantity may be purchased in any one day.

Quotas for the month of June were: 25 ounces of spirits or four  
quarts of Canadian wine of one gallon value or more, or two gallons of  
imported wine, or two dozen pints of beer.

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Ontario:

Purchase limits during the month of June were 53 ounces of spirits; and two gallons or twelve 26-ounce bottles of Canadian wine with a limit of three bottles per week, or four large bottles of imported wine with a limit of one bottle per day; and twelve large bottles or the equivalent of imported beer with a limit of six at any one time, or 36 small bottles or the equivalent when available of Canadian beer.

Quebec:

Ration limits for the month of June were 80 ounces of spirits per month. Beer and wine are not rationed at present in Quebec, but outlets are on a quota basis.

Saskatchewan:

Purchases limits for the month of June were: two bottles of spirits; and six bottles of native wine or three bottles of any other wine in a calendar month. Beer is not rationed, but is made available to the various outlets on a quota basis.

Purchase limits for the month of June were 30 ounces of spirits and two gallons or twelve 66-ounce bottles of Canadian wine with a limit of three bottles per week, or four large bottles of imported wine with a limit of one bottle per day; and twelve large bottles or the equivalent of imported beer with a limit of six at any one time, or 36 small bottles of the equivalent when available of Canadian beer.

Quebec

Ration limits for the month of June were 30 ounces of spirits per month. Beer and wine are not rationed at present in Quebec, but outlets are on a quota basis.

Quebec

Purchase limits for the month of June were two bottles of spirits and six bottles of native wine or three bottles of any other wine in a calendar month. Beer is not rationed, but is made available to the various outlets on a quota basis.

Quebec