

## Liquor and Industry.



Canada has a high reputation for sobriety. The prosecution of industry, the production of wealth, is not interfered with by the liquor traffic to the same extent as in older communities. There is however, still room for improvement in this respect. It is impossible to consider carefully, the evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic without being convinced that prohibition would be a vast benefit to our manufacturing interests.

Some of the evidence given by men of wide and long experience, forcibly presents the harm done by drinking habits and the benefits that result from the suppression of liquor selling. We select from the Minority Report simply a few testimonies from some of our best known Canadian business men.

**Roderick McDonald**, manufacturer of copper and brass goods, steam fixtures, etc., Halifax, N.S., employs 140 men. He said his firm had a decided preference for abstainers. They do all they can to keep drink shops away from the vicinity of their works. Customers, including brewers, object to drinking men being sent to work on their premises. As a ship owner he would not think of employing a captain or engineer who drinks. He added: "I believe that if we had prohibition for five years it would so change the face of the country that we would not know our Dominion. In making that statement I am simply voicing the opinion of Mr. Bright, Lord Palmerston and such statesmen."

**Charles Archibald**, manager of the Gower Mine, Cape Breton, N.S., employs from 300 to 400 men. He said:—The drink habit lessens decidedly the wage-earning power of men; their drinking is an injury to us also. We have certain expenses going on all the time, and if our men are off work this involves a loss to us—a very severe one. Previous to the enforcement of the Scott Act the loss was very great, both to the men and to us. There has been a marked improvement since the law has been in force; national prohibition would have a good effect upon our business and upon business interests generally.

**J. C. Risteen**, of J. C. Risteen & Co., planing mill and door and sash factory, Fredericton, N.B., said:—We must have men who do not tamper with liquor. It would be ruinous to our business to have drinking men. Under the license law we had more difficulty to get and keep sober men than now. The absence of liquor-selling places is good and helps the man to be temperate.

**Alex. Gibson**, Marysville, N.B., who employs in his lumber and milling business and cotton factory, 1,200 in the summer and 2,400 in the winter, is a strong advocate of abstinence and of legal suppression of the liquor traffic. He stated that no liquor is sold in the town of Marysville, to which fact he

## LIQUOR AND INDUSTRY.

attributes the absence of disorder and the thrift and prosperity of the people. In the thirty years during which he has developed the immense business under his control, though keeping all his property fully insured, he has not had to make a single claim for loss by fire, and this he thinks is largely due to the absence of liquor selling in the town. He expressed the belief that from a business point of view alone, it would be infinitely advantageous to the country to prohibit liquor traffic.

**Chas. E. McKeen**, manufacturer of boots and shoes, Quebec, said:—Considerable trouble is caused manufacturers by drinking employees. When a man is away it is our loss as well as his; it lessens our output, while our running expenses are the same; we sometimes have orders cancelled because not filled in time, the failure to fill them being due to drinking employees; a few drinkers often interfere with the work of many others. We had a case about two weeks ago; four men stopped the output of the entire factory for three or four days. He believed prohibition would be a great advantage to the business of the country.

**D. W. Karn**, manufacturer of pianos and organs, Woodstock, Ontario, employs two hundred men. He said he had been compelled at various times to discharge some of the best workmen he ever had, for drinking. Not only the men themselves lose by drinking, but their employers are losers too. He has lost hundreds of dollars by not being able to fill orders, the inability to fill them being caused by drinking men. When the Scott Act was in force there was a great improvement. It will be better still if we have a general prohibitory law.

**William J. Copp**, iron founder, Hamilton, Ont., employs one hundred and fifty men. He said:—The wage-earning power of drinking men is much reduced. Their drinking is also a very serious disadvantage to our business. The absence of one man at particular times may interfere with many men, hindering the work they have in hand. We have had serious losses from the absence of some on account of drink. The establishment of licensed drink shops near our works is injurious. They induce men to drink. Drink shops depreciate the value of property near them; national prohibition of the liquor traffic would have a very beneficial effect on the business interests of the country generally.

**Hart A. Massey**, Toronto, president of the Massey-Harris Co., manufacturers of agricultural implements, said:—The company employs from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred men. They pay in wages about \$500,000 annually. Their annual output is from \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000. They have had a good deal of trouble, first and last, on account of drinking employees, and have suffered considerable loss; they have had men who lost fully one-third of their time through drink. The drinking of one man often interferes with the work of a gang—their work has to stop while he is off drinking. There has scarcely been an instance of suffering in the families of the men that has not been traceable to drink. Other branches of business would not suffer by the abolition of the liquor traffic but would receive an impetus; forms of industry, now dormant for want of capital, would be established, and labor would find employment; the purchasing power of the people would be increased. A distillery or brewery with an annual output equal to theirs would not employ nearly so many men; a prohibitory law would be a decided advantage to the country, it would be the best law that could be given to the country.

Many similar testimonies might be quoted, proving beyond doubt that the liquor traffic is a curse to both employers and employed, and that its prohibition would be an immense boon to legitimate industry.