

COST OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

DIRECT COST.

The report of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic set out an estimate of the annual expenditure for strong drink in Canada in the following paragraph:

Taking an average of the quantities of wines, spirits and malt liquor entered for consumption in the five years ending 1893, but excluding cider and native wines, and taking an average of the retail prices, the calculation shows the sum of \$39,879,854, to be paid for liquor by the consumers. As more than one-half of this amount is paid for spirits to which, it is well understood, a large addition of water is made before they are vended to the public, the total amount paid is probably considerably in excess of the sum just mentioned.

The annual consumption of liquor has increased since this estimate was made, and a careful computation on the same basis puts the outlay for intoxicating liquor consumed in the Dominion in 1901 at \$47,106,948, an increase over twelve per cent. in ten years.

The money thus paid may be fairly said to represent so much diminution of wealth, as the liquor, when consumed, leaves the community in no way advantaged. When money is paid for clothing, food, or other commodities, the purchaser is supposed to have value for his outlay. Each party, buyer and seller, possesses wealth formerly held by the other, usually slightly increased by the exchange. The liquor seller possesses the wealth formerly held by his customer, but the customer-consumer has nothing. The community is poorer at least to the amount of money spent for the liquor. We have a right, therefore, to state that the country is impoverished annually by direct expenditure on liquor to the amount of \$47,106,948.

The country is also impoverished by the waste of grain and other material that was used in the manufacture of liquor. This material was home-produced or imported farm produce,

which, had it not been taken for making strong drink, would have been available for export or other use. An increase of twelve per cent. on the Commission's estimate of the cost of material used in making liquor gives us an outlay in 1901 for this purpose of \$2,115,417.

INDIRECT LOSS.

The sums mentioned represent what may be called the direct loss which the liquor traffic imposes upon the community. That traffic causes other and far greater losses which are not so easily ascertained. The Minority Report makes an estimate of some of them, based on data taken from the census returns of 1891, concerning our working population. As similar later returns have not yet been issued, we take the calculations then made, which may be summarized as follows:

LOSS OF LABOR.—The country loses a great deal because of the prevention of the production of wealth on account of persons being in jails, hospitals, asylums, or in any way idle through intemperance. The working of a gang of men in a factory, or any set of persons who work together, is interfered with by absence of one or more in the same way. Much of our most highly organized manufacturing industry is thus seriously hampered. Not only do those who drink lose time and possibly earnings; their fellow employees are also losers. The industry which employs them suffers loss. An English parliamentary report estimates over sixteen per cent. of the productive labor of the country as lost in this way. Assuming that in Canada the loss is only eight per cent., it amounts to \$76,288,000.

SHORTENED LIVES.—Careful calculations show that 3,000 lives are annually cut short in Canada by intemperance, each such death robbing the country of at least an average of ten years of productive power. It is estimated that in this way we sustain an annual loss of \$14,304,000.

MISDIRECTED WORK.—A similar calculation shows that the country loses by having about 13,000 men engaged in making and selling liquor, not actually adding anything to the wealth of the country but creating conditions which increase public burdens. If rightly employed, these men would add to the country an amount of wealth which we now have to do without, estimated at \$7,748,000.

INDIRECT COST.

A careful calculation shows that for the year 1901 the Dominion, Provincial and Municipal authorities of Canada expended in the administration of justice, and for the maintenance of penitentiaries, jails, asylums, reformatories, alm-houses and like institutions, sums totalling over \$7,000,000.

Assuming that one-half of this expenditure is fairly chargeable to the liquor habit and the liquor traffic, we get as the cost to the country thus caused a sum of more than \$3,500,000.

A SUMMING UP.

In this connection the fact must be noted that a proportion of the national, provincial and municipal revenues is derived from the liquor traffic. The total amount thus contributed for Dominion purposes in 1901 is shown by official returns to be \$9,779,364.

The net revenue of the Ontario Government in the same year from liquor licenses was \$304,676, and the net revenue of all the Ontario municipalities from the same source was \$250,482. These items vary in different provinces, and on the whole they aggregate throughout the Dominion about \$1,100,000 for local Government revenues, and \$400,000 for municipalities.

This is the price which the liquor traffic pays for the privileges granted it. It is right that these amounts should be set over against the items of loss, and the various expenditures caused by the traffic, hereinbefore considered.

This may be done as follows:

COST OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Amount paid for liquor by consumers.....	\$47,106,948
Value of grain etc., destroyed.....	2,115,417
Loss of productive labor.....	76,288,000
Loss through mortality caused by drink.....	14,304,000
Loss through misdirected labor.....	7,748,000
Cost of proportion of pauperism, disease, insanity and crime chargeable to the liquor traffic.....	3,500,000
Total.....	\$151,062,365

REVENUE FROM THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Dominion Government.....	\$9,779,364
Provincial Governments.....	1,100,000
Municipalities.....	400,000
	\$11,279,364
Net loss.....	\$139,783,001

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This startling calculation does not include, as a charge against the liquor traffic, the great amount of money spent in watching it and collecting the revenue from it. In reference to the similar calculation in his report in 1894, Rev. Dr. McLeod said :

In the foregoing table the items charged to the liquor traffic are moderate estimates, and many things which might probably be included, are omitted because of the difficulty of putting them into dollars and cents. Your Commissioner has no doubt that were fifty per cent. added to the shown balance against the liquor traffic, it would not then be excessive.

AN ANNUAL CHARGE.

It must also be kept in mind that the enormous balance chargeable to the liquor traffic represents only one year's waste. For many years like burdens, in proportion to the population, have been imposed upon the country. These facts make it easy to appreciate the truth and force of the statement made in 1884 by Hon. Mr. Foster. Under a table prepared by him, showing the amount of money actually paid out for liquor consumed in Canada from 1868 to 1882, inclusive, to have been \$493,200,000, he wrote :

One can scarcely grasp the awful significance of the above figures. The large quantities of grain that have been worse than wasted would have fed millions of people. The cost of liquors for one year exceeds the whole revenue of the Dominion of Canada. The cost per head has been fully twice as much as the total cost per head of all our customs dues since Confederation. The total amount spent in the fifteen years above tabulated aggregates, without counting interest, nearly \$500,000,000. This would have defrayed all our cost of government, built our railways, and left us without a shadow of a national debt. To all this we must add the incalculable cost of citizens slain, labor destroyed, pauperism borne and crime watched, restrained and punished. The wonder is that, with such terrible waste, our country enjoys any prosperity. If this waste could be made to cease, Canada in ten years would not know herself, so prosperous and wealthy would she have grown. Surely it is the part of all good citizens to see to it that such a frightful source of waste and destruction is dried up. Prohibition is the only effectual cure.

Will it not be wisdom to prohibit the worse than useless liquor traffic, and stop this terrible waste ?