

Wednesday, Feb. 29th

y wanted to lay at the door of the L.C.A. all responsibility for all crime in Ontario they should make "a clean sweep" of things, and be fair enough to attribute the great crime wave in the United States to the Volstead act.

In addition to supplying important figures relating to the Hanna Liquor Commission's administration of the law, Col. Price unwrapped a lot of traffic returns to prove that in spite of the 17

per cent. increase in all classes of cars last year over 1926, there had been an actual decrease of 14 in the number of motor accidents reported.

#### Many Foreign Cars.

This condition of affairs, together with the abnormal increase last year in foreign cars on Ontario roads, should, he submitted, be taken into consideration by all unprejudiced persons when considering the liquor law and conditions arising out of it.

Opposition members let the Attorney-General pretty well alone. There was only one semblance of a "flurry" when R. H. Miller, Liberal member for Haldimand, asked the Speaker if Col. Price's references, at the moment, had anything to do with the subject in hand.

The Attorney-General's reply was flattening. "I agree," he said, "with what the Prime Minister said the other day, that there are great many stupid people in this world."

#### Situation Since 1916.

Col. Price discussed at length the question of liquor consumption in Ontario, tracing the situation in this regard down from the inception of the Ontario Temperance Act to 1925 and 1926.

"Considering the fact," said the Attorney-General, "that the board had to open its business with almost an entirely green staff, very few of whom had had anything to do with the sale of liquors, or knew the different brands, it is a cause of congratulation that the stores got under way so quickly and advantageously."

In connection with the establishment of brewery warehouses, which today "are in reality beer stores, in which four breweries consent to operate collectively," he noted that the number in operation had advanced from 18 in June last to 25 in October, or a total of 75, with five others located just outside the Province receiving licenses and exporting to Ontario.

The enormity of handling beer orders at these warehouses could be visualized, Col. Price stated, when it is announced that more than 1,000,000 purchase orders were filled at various times during the five months of operation. In defense of the liquor control system he said: "Probably at no time in the history of any country has a system been set up which is so complete, which ministers to the requirements of those who purchase at the stores, protects the public generally, and keeps such a record as will enable an adequate control to be established."

#### "Permits and Licenses."

Under the head of "Permits and Licenses" Col. Price gave the House the following board figures:

Permits issued June 1-Oct. 31, 1927:

Resident .....	220,446
Temporary .....	53,890
Duplicate .....	5,041
Physicians .....	815
Druggists .....	571
Dentists and veterinary surgeons .....	423
Manufacturers .....	254
Mechanical and scientific .....	11
Sacramental wine .....	217
Hospitals .....	221

Total .....

Licenses issued for same period:

Brewers' licenses .....	36
Brewers' warehouses .....	676

Total .....

Native wine permits .....	1
Sacramental wine vendorships ..	3
Non-potable alcohol .....	4
Standard hotel .....	1,258

Total .....

Brewers' light beer permits .....	26
Brewers' light beer warehouse permits .....	86
Hotel light beer permits .....	1,102
Restaurant light beer permits ..	541
Shop light beer permits .....	519
Club light beer permits .....	84
Steamship light beer permits ...	3
Employees light beer permits ...	634
Total .....	2,995

Grand total licenses .....

#### "Control Features."

After disclosing to the House what the Liquor Board has done in a financial way—and these disclosures appear elsewhere in this issue of The Globe—the Attorney-General passed to what he termed the "control features" of the act.

"When," he said, "this law came into force the Liquor Control Board thought it would be advisable to put every citizen on an equal basis. The policy of the Government as announced to the electorate was to give people an opportunity to purchase reasonable supplies of liquor without subterfuge. In other words, they were getting a new charter of liberty. If they lived up to their responsibilities and their obligations, then they need fear nothing. Under these circumstances the board thought it advisable to start with a clean slate.

"They knew quite well that many men had broken the law under the Ontario Temperance Act, yet they felt that a great number of these men who had broken the law would abide by the present act if they were given an opportunity to do so. It was difficult for them to discriminate. Under these circumstances every man was issued a permit, whether he had broken the Ontario Temperance Act or not. Every hotelkeeper was given a new lease of liberty. In other words, the policy of the board was to put it up to the individual. If he was prepared to obey the law from now on, the board were prepared to give him a chance. I think you will agree with me that this, while creating certain difficulties for the board, which I will speak about as I go on, was the proper attitude of mind.

"The result was that every one secured a permit. In the early days, when very few stores were opened and the

vendors were new at the job, the censors found it difficult to adequately serve customers and at the same time give the proper supervision. No doubt certain persons did proceed to impose on the various vendors and inspectors. When one thinks, however, that there were over 700 people in the Province of Ontario issuing permits in the various localities and crowded cities, and the act came into force as well as it did, I think the whole people of the Province are to be congratulated on what occurred.

"There was, no doubt, the disposition of a great many people to try to create difficulties for the act, pointing out all its defects. People who could see no defects in the O.T.A. immediately saw plenty of defects in the operation of this act, and voiced their opinions through the press and otherwise. The board, however, kept along scrutinizing more closely every day, through its vendors, those who secured liquor on their permits, checking them down carefully, yet not miserably, until they have got a very close grasp of the situation. The first permits were issued for five months with the idea that they could run coterminously with the fiscal year, and with the further idea that at the end of five months it would enable the vendor in each store to check up the amounts that his customers were receiving.

#### Power of Vendor.

"The vendor, as you know, has power to refuse to give liquor on a permit if he sees that the customer has been receiving too much. The vendor has a greater power by suggestion and discussion and warning. Vendors are now better trained than they ever were before and they are exercising these powers.

"At the time the new permits were issued, 1,500 people had their permits cancelled, and the vendor at that time, when issuing new permits, warned many people that their permits would be cancelled unless they cut down the amount they were getting.

"To the general public throughout the Province I can say this: that they exercised a very great deal of moderation. Those who had been breaking the act, who were engaged in the hotel business before, or who had been bootlegging before, in many cases lived right up to the act, and lived up to their obligations. In some places, however, they started to get larger amounts on their permits and break the act.

#### Check More Closely.

"The honorable member for West Middlesex pointed out that in some cases three or four people have secured too much liquor on their permits; too many cases of beer within a certain time. The board have been grappling with this problem; they have been telling their vendors and their brewery inspectors that they must more closely check these up. There is no excuse for allowing men who are obviously reselling to get such large quantities of liquor and beer on their permits. The position of the Government on this matter is that there is no excuse for a vendor not doing his job. Ninety-nine per cent. of the vendors have done well, but where there is a vendor who thinks that it is his duty to sell and make big sales without controlling he will find himself in some other job. Neither the board nor the Government intend to back up any vendor who does not seem to appreciate that this is a 'control' law, and not a 'sales' law. There is nothing that any member of this House can say on that point that is stronger than what the Government itself says."

#### "Hedging In" of Purchases.

Col. Price enumerated the different "check-ups" available under the board's administration to prove that the Government had meant business when it had promised the people that control would be exercised over the sale of liquor. He felt that now there was a "hedging in" at every turn of the disposition of some people to get excessive quantities of liquor.

"Some people," he said, "have stated that the amounts obtainable by every person should be put on a similar basis. I think the House will see this was discussed quite fully when the act was before the House last session and that this is a matter for the board to gradually regulate."

People in Ontario, he declared, had lived under the Ontario Temperance Act for ten years. They had purchased probably one-sixth or one-seventh of their liquor through legitimate channels. They had turned to the bootlegger to drink all kinds of spirituous concoctions.

"Now," said Col. Price, "if the past ten years has produced a normal appetite on the part of the people there would have been more beer and wine drinking and less spirit drinking. There would have been no disposition to reach out for canned heat, lemon extract and all these things. But the result is today you have addicts to the use of canned heat and lemon extract, confirmed addicts for a number of years, people who do not want to drink anything else, the same as you have the cocaine addict, the morphia addict, etc.

"If you are, therefore, going to wean

these people away from drinking these concoctions to the drinking of something for less harmful and in proper quantities, then you must exercise your powers gradually and carefully. It will not do for us to say to these poor victims: 'You can have nothing to drink because you abuse it.' We must exercise this authority carefully."

Col. Price, in speaking on the matter of law enforcement by the Provincial and municipal police forces, said that all municipalities had been advised that the Provincial force can serve only as an "assisting force," and that the primary responsibility of enforcing the act rests with the municipalities themselves. In spite of the fact that the L.C.A. was a stiffer law than the O.T.A., and provided for more jail sentences, with a possible consequent loss in revenue to the municipalities, most municipalities, he said, had done very well in carrying out enforcement.

Public opinion was now behind the law.

"The law enforcement officers of the Crown," he said, "have found that the public are now anxious and willing to put the bootlegger out of business. I may say, generally speaking, that this has been accomplished. Our police officers and inspectors can get information now from citizens that was not available for the enforcement of the Ontario Temperance Act. Magistrates have more complete evidence placed before them to establish a case; they have no fear of injustice in giving a jail sentence, and where a man is selling, not only the courts, but the public feel that he is committing a misdemeanor, and he should pay the penalty."