

BEER RATIONING BY BOOK PLAN LIKELY: GORDON

**Probably Effective in
May; Says Not Enough
Is Available for Demand**

Probable rationing of beer in Ontario May 1 or some time during that month was indicated by Hon. A. St. Clair Gordon, chairman of the Ontario Liquor Control Board, before the Legislature Public Accounts Committee yesterday. Mr. Gordon said there would be "some kind of ration book" and said rationing would be necessary for reasons general in the Dominion.

Change of hours of sale in hotels would require thorough study, Mr. Gordon told the committee. But he didn't think hotels should continue to close when their beer was gone. Questioned by Opposition Leader George Drew, he admitted that absenteeism was caused by men quitting work to line up at beer warehouses, but he did not know on how great a scale it existed.

"Drifting" to Beer.

Because of restrictions on wine and liquor people were "drifting" to beer, he said. "There's isn't enough beer available for all the people who want it. There will be a shortage."

"Doesn't the workman feel he's entitled to his beer?" asked Col. Drew. "That's why we are considering rationing beer May 1 or in the month of May," replied Mr. Gordon. "Even then the public will have to co-operate. If you can't get it today you'll have to wait till next day. There'll have to be some form of ration book." He intimated hotel patrons would not be rationed, but, as for hotel hours, he said: "Within a few weeks we may have a scheme."

He told Col. Drew Ottawa had not notified the board before beer restrictions were enforced, but added: "It will be a very difficult thing to handle if there are very severe restrictions on the manufacture of beer."

Col. Drew pointed out that though Ottawa gave no advance notification of rationing of tea, coffee, butter, etc., still those commodities were not under control by a board in Ontario, as liquor is, and he felt the controller should have been consulted.

With the Federally-ordered reduction in alcoholic strength of all liquor in Canada, Liquor Board stocks on hand had not been tampered with, Mr. Gordon told the committee, and to a query from L. M. Frost (Prog. Con., Victoria), as to whether addition of water to spirits to weaken it should not have been accompanied by lower prices, "No, it's a very fair field of taxation." Where alcoholic content was reduced, duties were increased, he added.

Whether the present beer warehouse distribution system would be changed or taken over by the board, Mr. Gordon said he couldn't say. Every Province had a different system.

Questioned on liquor prices, he said a \$2.60 bottle of rye whiskey cost 72 cents to manufacture, or \$8.60 a dozen, on which there was \$11.65 Dominion Government tax. Col. Drew saw in such figures "some explanation for bootlegging from illicit stills."