

LETTERS FROM THE MAYORS OF TOWNS IN WESTERN CANADA

Give their Opinion as to the Success of Government Control when Compared with the Prohibition Law Previously in Force

The following letters have recently been received by Mr. Robert Cotton from the Mayors of various towns and cities in Western Canada where they have had experience of both Prohibition and Government Control.

Of course, the proposals for Government Control which Premier Stewart has submitted for the approval of the people of Prince Edward Island are much more strict than the Control Acts in operation in any of the Western Provinces. The earlier Government Control Acts adopted in Canada were largely experimental and the Provinces more lately adopting Government Control are able to benefit by the experience of the other Provinces which have had it in operation for some time.

We in Prince Edward Island should get a better Government Control Act than has been enacted in any of the other Provinces, and we should also get better results from the enforcement of the Act. Very soon after the announcement was made that a Government Control Law, as opposed to the so-called Prohibition Law would be the outstanding issue in our Provincial Election, Mr. Cotton wrote a personal letter to the mayors of a considerable number of smaller towns, larger towns and cities of the four Western Provinces as follows:—

Your Worship:—
 "In this Province preparations are being made for an election campaign in which the principal issue is likely to be Government Control of the sale of liquor.
 "I would very greatly appreciate receiving your opinion as to the success of Government Control in your town and Province as compared with the Prohibition Law previously in force.
 Yours faithfully,
 (Sgd.) "ROBERT L. COTTON."

If there is any one man in a town or city who should be able to give an authoritative opinion in respect to the conditions in that town it surely is the Mayor—the man whom a majority of the citizens by their votes have chosen to be the head of their municipal government.

Mr. Cotton received a large number of replies to his letters.

And the unanimity with which the Mayors of these Western Towns and Cities—big and little—expressed their opinion as to the improvement which has resulted since the adoption of even those experimental forms of Government Control which have been adopted by the Western Provinces, is surprising.

Mr. Cotton had letters from the Mayors of the great cities of the West—Winnipeg and Vancouver—both of whom favor Government Control and both of whom in their letters give their ideas as to improvements which might be made in the Control Acts of their Provinces, from which still better results might be expected. In concluding his letter Mayor Taylor, of Vancouver, says: "I know our Prohibition friends strenuously object to anything but straight prohibition legislation, but from my observations in the West conditions are much worse when under Prohibition than under Government Control."

But we here, are not so much interested in the opinions of the Mayors of the great cities—the populations of which are far greater than that of the whole of the Province of Prince Edward Island. The opinions of the Mayors of the smaller cities and towns—the marketing centres of the Western farming communities where conditions are quite similar to our own—interest us much more and it is some of these that Mr. Cotton read over the radio and which are published herewith.

There of course will be some who will question the authenticity of the letters—and who will say that they have been "doctored." Mr. Cotton will be very glad to show the original letters to any who would like to see them.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

High River, Alberta, May 4th, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 In answer to your letter in regard to the working of Government Control of the liquor system of Alberta, would say: First, I am not a drinking man. Second, I do not know of any good that can be said of the liquor business. But we find our present system working much more satisfactorily than our so-called Prohibition did. There is less drunkenness to be seen and the consumption of hard liquor has decreased. We have driven the bootlegger out of business and created a greater respect for the law. I have lived here under the old liquor law, under Prohibition, and under our present system, and have no hesitation in saying that the present Alberta law is the best of the three systems we have seen here.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) W. GEO. YOUNG, Mayor of High River.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Kindersley, Sask., May 3rd, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 I received your letter of the 26th ult. My opinion, and that of many others who are not prejudiced, is that Government Control of Liquor in this Province and the different towns, is far more successful and gives greater satisfaction to the public than the Prohibition Law previously in force. I find in my capacity as a Justice of the Peace that we have under the Liquor Act less than half the cases we had under Prohibition. Under Prohibition we had secret drinking by people that in the ordinary way were considered respectable, also more young people were drinking because they seemed to think it smart to do so. Under our present Act we have practically eliminated the bootlegger. This alone should, in my mind, be sufficient to recommend Government Control.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) G. R. B. FRERE, Mayor.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Kamsack, Sask., May 4th, 1927

Dear Sir:
 Replying to your letter of April 26th inst., re Government Control of the sale of liquor. While the Government Liquor Act may not be 100 per cent. perfect, yet I believe it is the most successful control of liquor that we have had yet. It has practically put a stop to the making of home brew.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) W. M. JACKETT, Mayor.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Red Deer, Alberta, May 2nd, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 Replying to your communication of April 26th, while there is still much to be desired in the operation of our Government Liquor Control, I am of the opinion that conditions are much better than under the Prohibition Law which was previously in force.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) HAROLD J. SNELL, Deputy-Mayor.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Humbolt, Sask., May 4th, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 Yours of the 26th ult. to hand and note contents. In our case Government Control has done wonders for us here. We used to be pestered to death with bootleggers peddling home-brew. The Royal Mounted Police used to have several convictions per month re the inland revenue. Let alone the fellows that got away with it. Since Government Control this all has disappeared as if by magic. For a fact we have had only one person charged with making home-brew in the last eighteen months. Another phase is this. Formerly we used to have many drunken people to deal with. The brewers would take a jug to town and would dispose of same in the different livery stables, garages, and our police were kept quite busy gathering them in. Now people who feel inclined to buy anything, go to the Government Store, get their package and go home, and that is the last of it. In my opinion Government Control has been a first class move in our Province.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) A. J. KRUSE, Mayor.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Rosthern, Sask., May 3rd, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 I am in receipt of your letter of April 26th, with reference to the success of the Government Liquor Control in this Province as compared with the Prohibition Law previously in force. I am pleased to state that under Government Control there is neither the drunkenness or the breaking of the laws which existed under Prohibition. Our community is made up largely of settlers from the European countries, and under Prohibition the manufacture of home-brew was carried on very extensively, and while this has not yet been stamped out, I think I am safe in saying that there is not one still in use to every five which operated in prohibition days, and I believe that this number will gradually be decreased. While I am strongly in favor of Prohibition personally, I have seen enough to satisfy myself that it is impossible, and I believe that the next best remedy is Government Control of the Liquor Traffic.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) GEO. BROWN, Mayor.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Indian Head, Sask., May 3rd, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 Re yours of the 26th, to our Mayor. His Worship has instructed me to write you saying that in his opinion the system now in vogue, namely, Government Control, is much better in every way when compared with the Prohibition Law, which we had had previously.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) JOHN LAW, Town Clerk.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Coleman, Alberta, May 3rd, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 Your letter of April 26th, was handed over to me by the Mayor, who asked me to reply. In my opinion the Government Liquor Control Act of Alberta has proved a success beyond any doubt, and I think I am in a position to know, as I have been Chief of Police in Coleman for the past eight years, and went all through the Prohibition days. There is not half the drunkenness with the Government Control, and if a person wants a bottle of liquor he can go to the Government Vendors and get the real stuff for half the price he paid for the bootleg whiskey. Prohibition was a complete failure in Alberta just as it is in the States. It is a thing impossible to enforce.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) J. HOUGHTON, Chief of Police.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Watrous, Sask., May 4th, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 In my opinion the Government Control of the sale of liquor in the Province of Saskatchewan is better than the Prohibition Law previously in force. In Saskatchewan the Province is divided into districts and the people in each district have the right by vote to say whether or not a liquor store may be located in that district. In this town there is no liquor store, so I can not say much about that end of it.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) C. V. MACKIE, Town Clerk.

Robert L. Cotton, Esq.,
 Charlottetown, P. E. Island.

Hanna, Alberta, May 4th, 1927.

Dear Sir:
 Yours of the 27th inst., re the working of the Alberta Liquor Law, to hand and noted. My opinion is that it is the best Liquor Law in the Dominion. Home-brew bootlegging is absolutely cut out. Under the former so-called Prohibition Law there was not a week but we would hear of three or four bootleggers in town peddling their wares. Since our present law I have not heard of a bootlegger being in our town. A few glasses of beer seems to satisfy the liquor thirst of most people and when they can get that openly they do not buy a bottle of hard stuff and get drunk on it. I am enclosing a clipping which appeared in today's Calgary Herald, which shows you what some other people think of it. Of course, professional prohibitionists find fault with it, but it is the consensus of opinion of most people in Alberta that it is working well.

Yours truly,
 (Sgd.) DR. G. R. WADE, Mayor.