

**A Bright Idea**



**LACO**  
**MAZDA LAMPS**

**Toronto Has Problem With Lotion Drinkers**

BY JACK HAMBLETON  
(In the Toronto Globe and Mail)  
On the front lawn of one of Toronto's proudest churches a drunken man snored and mumbled incoherently under the bright sun. Behind him, in a little patch of evergreens, were three empty bottles. They had contained the favorite drink of Toronto's slum sections—bay rum. The unconscious man was another victim of the craze which has impelled people to buy "baysie" rubbing alcohol, shoe polish, lilac lotion and half a dozen other lethal preparations.

And with cold weather coming on, Chief Coroner Dr. Smirle Lawson once again warned Toronto of the dangers contained in the "lotion" preparations which are readily available at many drug stores, downtown novelty shops and some barbers. For the preparations are a drug; a drug which rapidly reduces the drinker to a hulk of helplessness, ready to drop asleep where and when he or she happens to be, and with resistance lowered, an easy prey for pneumonia.

A few nights ago an inquest was held into the death of a man who died in St. Michael's Hospital. Briefly here is the history of the case: The man came from Ireland some years ago. He became a bay rum addict. He couldn't keep a job more than a week or two. He was found unconscious on a Bay St. Veranda. After examination at the Don Jail he was sent to St. Michael's. He was suffering from, in the first instance, bay rum poisoning. He had taken overdoses of bromides to settle his nerves. Pneumonia found him easy prey. And that story, Dr. Lawson believes, will be repeated unless some steps are taken soon.

Amendments to the Liquor Control Act introduced at the last session of the Legislature made it illegal to manufacture any perfume, lotion, toilet water or similar preparation without sufficient medication to prevent their use as an alcoholic beverage, or for any person to use them as beverages. It just didn't work. Despite the addition of such things as turkey red, burdock, castor oil derivatives, camellia, numerous preparations are being sold every day in Toronto. Most of them contain no warning that the contents are poisonous.

One neighborhood druggist told his reporter yesterday that the main trouble is that some one had called him for a bottle of rubbing alcohol and five bottles of soft drinks. He checked back and discovered a drunken party was in progress. The order was not delivered. But all druggists aren't as careful, despite repeated warnings of the Ontario College of Pharmacy and police. At one drugstore in the

Sherbourne-Dundas St. E. district yesterday, this reporter bought a 25-cent bottle of rubbing alcohol with no questions asked. The druggist simply pushed a register over to be signed. It contained at least a dozen similar orders all within the last three days.

Bay rum can be bought just about anywhere at prices ranging from 19 cents near Queen and Yonge to 30 cents at a cigar store near the Metropolitan Church. The average man doesn't use a bottle of bay rum for face or hair tonic in six months. Yet, in half a dozen stores yesterday, a steady stream of men and women customers were buying it— with no questions asked anywhere.

In the network of lanes running behind and between downtown streets in the Dundas to Queen, Church to Sherbourne area, there is a heavy sprinkling of glass. Close examination reveals the presence of countless labels of bay rum bottles and complete empty bottles, which had contained it. There is an alley on the south side of the old Mutual St. Arena. It has obviously been—and still is—a favorite drinking spot of the rubber-dubblers or "paysies."

This reporter left the unfortunate man who was still asleep at the Metropolitan Church three hours later. He walked across the street to a cigar store. "Do you handle bay rum?" he asked the proprietor. "Sure," was the reply, and a bottle was produced. At a Sherbourne St. store a poorly dressed, shabby-looking individual came in. "How much is rubbing alcohol?" he asked. "Twenty-five and 40 cents." The man pawed through his pockets and produced 40 cents. "Did you get one yesterday?" the druggist asked. "Yes." "Well, you can't have another today." The man shambled out. A moment later, the druggist took this reporter's 25 cents for a bottle of the same liquid.

One novelty store on Queen St. E. was doing a rushing business. Police recently found 500 bottles of the "beverage" there. But there's no law against selling the stuff and dozens of people bought it there yesterday, including one truck driver who parked his vehicle long enough to run in and grab a bottle.

Here's what downtown police officials think of the present situation:

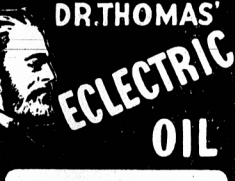
"Some of these rummies have been drinking the stuff for years. No matter what bitter or distasteful substance the manufacturers may add to it, they still drink it. Sometimes they mix it with soft drinks; others can and do drink it straight. We believe that if the sale of it was cut out altogether, there would be 70 per cent of our drunkenness problem solved right there."

"While the law says you can't use the stuff as an alcoholic beverage, the fact still remains you can walk into the nearest lane and drink it. And you can repeat the process until you fall down unconscious. That is just what many people are doing every day in Toronto."

**This War—Four Years Ago**

SEPTEMBER 19, 1940 — German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop arrived at Rome for conferences with Mussolini and Count Ciano. Hungarian government accused Hungarian soldiers and civilians of massacring Rumanian peasants in Transylvania. S. A. P. raided Dortmund-Ems Canal.

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