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EDITORIAL.

THREE DEADLY FOES.

"We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Drink; and as far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is Drink."

—*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*

It is stated by no less an authority than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that "success in the war is now purely a question of munitions" a statement made not as his own opinion only, but as the conviction of Sir John French, and of the Secretary of State for War. The opinion expressed by an influential deputation, received by Mr. Lloyd George at the Treasury on March 29th, from the Shipbuilders' Employers' Federation, that in order to meet the national requirements at the present time, and the urgent necessities of the position, there should be a total prohibition during the period of the war of the sale of exciseable liquors, is therefore of the very highest importance. The deputation did not include any total abstainers, and for that reason the views which they expressed came with more force.

The position is that we are engaged in a struggle for national existence, that success depends upon the output of a sufficient supply of munitions, and that this output is being seriously reduced because of the avoidable loss of time occasioned by the drinking habit, a loss estimated by the deputation at 80 per cent. While some men are doing splendid work, probably as good as that of the men in the trenches, many are not working anything like full hours, and the deputation were unable to attribute this to any other cause but drink.

The gravity of the position cannot be over estimated, and the deputation were unanimous in making the above recommendation. They represented that more

restriction of hours, or even total prohibition within war-work areas, was not sufficient, as certain classes would be entirely unaffected, and they considered that total prohibition should apply, as an emergency war measure not only to public houses, but to private clubs, and other licensed premises, so as to operate equally for all classes of the community. They believed that there was a general consensus of opinion on the part of the workers favourable to total prohibition along the lines indicated.

It is impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the statements made by the deputation, supported as the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted with evidence which appeared quite irrefutable, which he was convinced from his own knowledge simply represented the truth.

In any measures, however drastic, which the Government find necessary to deal with the situation we are convinced that they will be supported by the nation as a whole. And this is important for, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out "before you take steps of this kind you must feel that you have every class of the community behind you, when you are taking action which interferes, and must interfere, very severely with the individual liberties of men of all sections." He added "I have a growing conviction, based on accumulating evidence, that nothing but root-and-branch methods will be of the slightest avail in dealing with this evil . . . if we are to settle German militarism we must first of all settle with the drink. We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Drink; and as far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is Drink."

In conclusion Mr. Lloyd George stated that he was permitted by the King to say that he is very deeply concerned on this question.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)