

surely come for it, both in the interest of the soldiers and of the general industrial community, to formulate drastic measures for dealing with the drink evil. Why should Australia continue to be the one country in the civilised world where soldiers and civilians are freely encouraged to drink at all hours of the day and far into the night? Alcohol does no good to anybody. It is neither a food nor an innocent or helpful stimulant. To most men it is a rank poison, and it is directly responsible for every military disorder that has scandalised us since the war began, and for half the social maladies that ravage the body politic. Russia, France, and Italy prepared for their life and death struggle against the Central Powers by crushing the liquor traffic out of existence, and thereby they strengthened their belligerent capacity to an incalculable degree. Britain was slow to follow suit, having to combat a multitude of special vested interests; but she has never ceased fighting the plague, and it appears now that she has it by the throat. Through Greater London and the neighbouring districts at this moment, and also in all the other great centres of population, public-houses are not allowed to remain open for more than 5½ hours per day, and the custom of 'shouting' has been constituted a penal offence. Is it beyond our common sense to effect a similar instalment of reform throughout the Commonwealth? Does any man suppose that it is less essential for Australians to be preserved from temptations to intemperance than Englishmen, Frenchmen or Russians? Are we less interested in doing all that is necessary to conquer the enemies of civilisation than our Allies?"

Dr Mary Booth, of Sydney, in the course of a statement, which was made at a meeting of the Women's National Movement for stopping the sale of intoxicants at 6 p.m., said that 1500 men had failed to take their places in the firing line at Gallipoli, and had been forced to stay in Egypt, mainly through inefficiency caused by drink and between 300 and 600 soldiers had deserted from troopships in Melbourne.

ALCOHOLIC DEGENERACY.

One of our greatest scientists has said:—"A great wave of degeneracy is sweeping the land—a degeneracy so appalling in magnitude that it staggers the mind. What is the cause of this degeneracy? A hundred different intermediate agencies may contribute to the undoing of the race, but back of them all stands alcohol as the chief degenerative factor, numbering more victims than have been slain in all the wars and in all the epidemics of acute disease that have swept the country within two hundred years. The application of modern scientific methods has reduced the mortality from acute diseases, such as typhoid, yellow fever, and the plague. The sources and the carriers of these infections have been discovered. By abolishing the sources and exterminating the fly, the mosquito, and the rat, the average length of life has been increased. With what marked contrast do we deal with alcohol, that most potent source and carrier of chronic disease. Boards of Health, armed with the police power of the State, eradicate the carriers of typhoid and quarantine the victims, but alcohol—a thousand times more destructive to public health than typhoid fever—continues to destroy. Alcoholic degeneracy is the most important sanitary question before the country, and yet the health authorities do not take action, as alcohol is entrenched in politics. We are face to face with the greatest crisis in our country's history. The alcohol question must be settled within the next ten years, or some more virile race will write the epitaph of this country."

ORGANISING FUND.

The following amounts have been received for the Organising Fund during the month of February, 1916: 1st, Bluff Union, 10s; 1st, Auckland Union, £2; 2nd, Invercargill Union, £4 10s; 2nd, Christchurch Union, £5; 3rd, New Plymouth Union, £2; 3rd, Otautau (Southland) Union, £1 10s; 3rd, Dunedin Union, £6; 4th, Matakana Union, 10s; 5th, South Invercargill Union (per Miss Henderson), £1 11s; 7th, Hastings Union, £1; 9th, Lyttelton Union, 10s.

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ENGLAND'S BOOZE BILL AGAIN.

London, October 9.—A great number of English financiers are deeply concerned over the enormous loans that their country has negotiated and those that are likely to follow if the war continues.

These same high brows are surrounded by a condition which makes the much talked of war loans dwindle considerable by comparison.

The recent loan of one hundred million pounds is a mighty big sum of money. It represents the sacrifice that England is willing to make to preserve to posterity its rightful heritage.

This sum, which startled the whole Western Hemisphere, is forced somewhat into the back-ground by statistics which tell us that the same England spends **every year** one hundred and sixty million pounds for drink.

And this represents the sacrifice that England's posterity is making to insure to the present brewery barons their blood money.

In the current number of the "Edinburgh Review," its editor estimates that by the time the war ends the increase of England's national debt will not be less than two billion pounds. This will mean an annual charge, for interest and sinking fund, of one hundred and ten million pounds. Harold Cox adds to this another twenty million pounds for pensions to disabled soldiers and to widows and dependents of the fallen, making a total of one hundred and thirty million pounds.

It is a monstrous big sum to find every year, but it is thirty million pounds less than the amount that she spends in a year on various forms of alcoholic swill.

If the same English experts will come to life and abolish the traffic in alcoholic poisons as did Russia by proclamation, she could pay off her national debt without becoming one whit poorer.

Indeed, if the optimistic reports are to be believed, she would be all the richer for it.

England's booze bill makes England's war bill blush for shame.—"New Republic."

Difficulties are just things to overcome after all.—Lieutenant Shackleton.