

to legislate in the direction of the Alliance as fully as possible, as well as to give a reflection of public opinion, falling vastly short of total prohibition; but he found the area was a difficult question. In the smallest parish in this country, if the parishioners objected to the liquor traffic being in their midst, they should have the power of removing it. There was an Act of Parliament ten years old, an important one for towns seeking public improvements. It was the Borough Funds Act. It gave to every community through the ratepayers the power of a direct popular veto upon Improvement bills being applied for. Any bill wanted—to buy gas-works, make streets, or remove liquor shops, as they had done in Birmingham—could not be obtained without going to London. The genius of recent legislation was going back to the old Saxon form of Government, when the people voted directly for and against things. At the present time they found that Act on the Statute-book, passed by a Liberal Government, and endorsed by a Conservative Government, empowering them to give a veto on the question as to whether they should have pure water or not, and other questions. At a town's meeting for and against a proposed Improvement Bill, two men could demand a poll, and then the whole of Birmingham would have to say yes or no to that Improvement Bill. They had not far to go for machinery to enable them to say yes or no for whisky as well as for water. Manchester and Liverpool had said yes or no for water. That was a *plebiscite* of the whole community. Government would have little work to do to find an Act to enable the people to say yes or no to the question as to whether they wanted liquor shops in their parish. The question of the majority necessary had been discussed, but it was a simple majority in the Borough Funds Act, and the conviction increased that under no circumstances should a minority force liquor shops on a majority. They were therefore moving on towards a simple majority in the exercise of the popular veto. Thus, with a popular veto in force such as was provided by the Borough Funds Act and the Acts to which it referred, the opinion of a parish could be obtained, and, acting on the decision against continuing the traffic in their midst, the licensing authority, however constituted, would simply be instructed not to renew the licences which would run out at the end of the year for which