

at least as good business to prevent loss of life amongst those who are born in the country and so prevent the waste of citizenship. Or, take our action with regard to the question of tuberculosis and the waste of life caused by that terrible disease. It is well agreed that every effort should be put forward to prevent the waste caused by that destroyer of life in this country. But, were we able to follow the deleterious effect upon mind, morals and physique of cigarette smoking by the young of this country, I am not sure that we should not find more waste of life—to say nothing of the deterioration of morals and habits—than we make up by our efforts to protect our people against the great white plague. I think it is a fair subject for all legislatures, and particularly for this parliament, to seriously consider, how far it can go and what it can do to prevent this waste and this deterioration through the use of cigarettes by the boys and youths of this country. I do not think that any one will find much fault with that statement of the case. Well, then, here is the position: This waste is going on; every year sees a new generation coming up to the age when this scourge can begin its work upon them. Every year sees the effect that it is having upon the young life in our country, an evil which must perpetuate itself in adult life as, those who are falling in to this habit grow older. Are we to do something, or are we to sit idly by and do nothing with reference to this scourge of the country?—for it is neither more nor less than a scourge. Of course, we must all agree that anything that is within our power we ought to do. But have we ever seriously considered in this parliament how far we can go in this matter? I had great hopes of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). He sympathized so strongly with the hon. gentleman (Mr. Blain) who moved this resolution and declared so warmly his desire to see the evil cured, that I began to think, that, if he could not go so far as approve the legislation asked at least he could point out to the House and country some line of action which could be entered upon to mitigate, at least, in some degree the evils which he and all of us deplore. But he does not end with that. I do not say that it was his duty to enunciate a policy. It was of interest to me to know, and I am sure it would be of interest to the country to know, how far he was prepared to go, and how far his many friends and supporters in this House and in the country would go, towards mitigating the evils which are commonly deplored.

There is another point, in which I do not agree with my hon. friend. I am not a medical man, nor is the right hon. gentleman, but I would not subscribe to the idea that adults can use tobacco, as it is commonly used, with absolute safety, I mean that, as my right hon. friend put it,

it is absolutely innocuous to men of adult years. I cannot subscribe to that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Is that the experience of my hon. friend, that the use of tobacco is injurious to grown up men? He does not use tobacco and I do not. But I give my experience, and what is his experience?

Mr. FOSTER. My right hon. friend will agree with me that there are two methods by which we learn, one is experience and the other is observation. All the knowledge that comes from observation personally, from the observation of others in and through a series of years, the opinions of medical men, the results which have been treasured up and put upon record—all that forms a body from which we make our inferences outside of experience. I may say that so far as experience goes I have had but very little in this matter, either as an infant or an adult. I have never been able to conquer the strong natural aversion to tobacco with which I believe almost all people come into the world. It is a taste which, I think, in most cases has to be acquired, and there are certain inward and outward strivings which are necessary in order to acquire a taste for and an ability to enjoy what they call the weed. I have not had very much experience in that respect. The experience I have had has not been very pleasant, so far as I can remember, and it takes an effort of memory to go back that far. But what I mean to say is that if, upon the young person of the human family, the use of tobacco in the form of cigarettes is admittedly injurious, a priori I think we can argue that it is injurious to the human system; and that if it is injurious to the young, it cannot be, as a rule, healthful to the old; that if the old can use and enjoy it without absolutely quick ill effects, it is because they have become inured to it, and it constitutes no argument at all that if they had never contracted the habit they would not be far better off physically, mentally and morally. But I have not lived so long as I have without being able to judge by observation of the ill effects of smoking and of the use of tobacco upon others than children. I would be sorry to have the opinion go out from this House that the use of tobacco in all its forms can be indulged in by adults with absolute safety and without any hurtful results. I think the experience of the world and medical observation does not carry out that view.

However, to come back to the matter which is before us, I would be sorry if something could not be done to voice the opinion of this parliament in a more moderate way—if my hon. friend behind me (Mr. Blain) will excuse me for using that word—and in a way which would obtain a larger body of support, against the