

## THE FALLACY OF "GOVERNMENT CONTROL."

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will now raise a generation which will be incapable of talking the drivel which is heard on our streets and platforms about the "good creatures of God." Dynamite is a good creature of God but we do not let everyone handle it for private ends. Opium is certainly a good creature of God but we do not sanction its indiscriminate use. Alcohol is a good creature of God; but scientific knowledge is now absolute that alcohol is a narcotic incapable of stimulating under any conditions whatever any organ or activity of the body. Like opium it may deaden the sensibilities to unpleasant circumstances and thus served its purpose in the ghastly scenes of war. But it gave no courage and no strength and no increased power of resistance. It deadened discomfort and lowered sensibility in the presence of revolting tasks.

No man talks better or thinks better or plays better as the result of alcohol. Alcohol does not even stimulate conversation; it simply removes the power of self criticism which checks conservation by caution or by self respect. This is not the opinion of some fanatic but the unanimous agreement of the best experts of Britain.

The question confronts everyone whether the state finds it compatible with its highest interests to sanction the commercialising of the impulse to escape complete manhood by deadening the sense of responsibility. It is futile to talk about "stopping when one has had enough." The commission is unanimous that one glass of whiskey is enough to impair very measurably the power of co-ordination of activities. As Dr. Gordon Bell, the provincial health officer of Manitoba, said at the National Health Congress lately when a normal man has consumed a glass or two of whiskey he is no longer fully normal. He is temporarily mentally defective in just the element of self criticism which marks the fully responsible person.

## Conscription for Killing or Saving.

Should the state sanction the systematic tampering with its manhood and womanhood? The vitality of the race is not a private possession. The human organism which is to play a part in the life history of the race is not a private commodity. It is essentially a function of society. The very gentlemen who clamour most about personal liberty insisted during the war on the right of the state to utilise each personal organism for the social welfare even to the point of using it to kill or be killed, to conserve the life of the race. It is a small thing to demand that men shall live clean and free from deliberate tampering with the racial blood. The only difference is that the conscription of manhood in the war was in a cause which we believed without full knowledge to be just, and the other is a case in which with the full knowledge of the best scientists of the empire we affirm to be essential to the vitality of the race. The present writer was associated with the chief opponents of prohibition in the fight for conscription and he insists that the principle which expropriates manhood for social functions makes intolerable the pure egoism that denies social control over a purely capricious taste for perverted forms of life.

May one remark that there is something approaching the nauseous in the utilisation—one might say the exploitation—by certain persons, of the most sacred names for purely controversial ends. No prohibitionist is discussing prohibition as a means of enforcing religion. Character is a most complex product but every adult character is a social product. It is as much the creation of the society in which one lives as it is a creation of the man who is the member of society. The institutions which exist as a means of self-realization are not external to us but out very life-stuff, the stuff of our spiritual existence. We exist only as sons and brothers, citizens and

churchmen, comrades in work or profession or play. The only liberty available is the liberty to function freely in one's social relations including as this does one's place in the transmission of life.

The state now takes cognizance of the traffic in every other narcotic and no serious man challenges the act. It is only those dwellers in the nether world of the past who are dead to the living world of thought, who speak of alcohol as a stimulant well enough while taken in moderation.

## Temperance Not in Issue.

Temperance, like chastity and kindness, are virtues of the spirit and the result of spiritual discipline. Now the state is not concerned with these things in its use of its power of compulsion. But the state, unless we reduce it to a sordid machine, is responsible to see that no hindrance be encouraged which would hinder the expression of the highest manhood and womanhood. Trade in womanhood is forbidden, though unchastity is not the concern of the state. Loving kindness is no concern of the state but old age pensions may be. Pensions and workmen's compensation are not based on Christian charity but on the idea of simple equity.

Temperance, therefore, is as distinct from prohibition as workmen's compensation is from Christian charity. True the ideal of Christian charity would involve the compensation. But this is incidental and the church will welcome the compensation act not in order to enforce kindness but because it is just. So the church, by increasing majorities, is insisting on prohibition not to enforce temperance or self control, but to establish the social organization on a sound scientific basis.

To introduce talk about temperance is a shocking impertinence. You might as well say, when parliament was discussing the age of consent for girls, that you cannot make men moral by act of parliament. True, but utterly irrelevant. Yet the act of parliament and the customs which it tends to promote while it will not make immoral men into moral ones, will tend to make moral men in the future.

## Government Sale vs. Government Control.

Government sale, whatever its disguise, is an attempt to commercialize a custom derived from the age when, as Vance Thompson has said, Society was organized on the basis of booze. Social life centred in booze and the day is gone when this can be tolerated. The morality of that age is passing before the impact of a richer humanity.

Government sale is the tragedy of the past. Of the peoples who have adopted it only one, Sweden, still retains it and even Sweden has just resolved in its legislature, to end the traffic in liquors over 2.8 per cent. spirit, and to refer the remainder to the popular vote. No more impertinent and ignorant appeal was ever made to people than the effort to prejudice the case by saying that the people of British Columbia need no light from outside. Are we aliens to the world of culture? Are we aliens to civilization? Let that kind of talk cease while we discuss the issue.

Government sale versus government control is the issue before us. The two are incompatible, and have ever proved so. Government control can come only as the province is vested with the powers offered under the new Federal law which deals with making and importing liquor. The distillers view of this law is seen in the fact that Gooderhams announced their abandonment of the manufacture of whiskey, while Corbys have already turned attention to industrial alcohol. Yet this province, alone in Canada, is denied the right to speak on the matter. The legislature pledged its word that it would give this right if the people support the present act. The prime minister took the initiative in the pledge. That pledged word of honor is violated if the premier advises the dissolution of the house so as to prevent the implementing of the pledge which he himself initiated. To postpone the fulfilment to another house is no fulfilment. Government control stands or falls with opposition to government sale.