

for making the country more sober, and that is all. May there not be other suggestions which may commend themselves to the country? I for one think there may be, and the suggestion which I, as at present advised, think the best and most fruitful is one which has been proposed by Mr. Chamberlain, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, and which is founded on the system which has been tried with immense success in Sweden; the same system on which Sir Robert Anstruther founded part of his bill of 1874, which received the support of, amongst others, our late excellent friend and neighbour, Mr. Dingwall Fordyce. Mr. Chamberlain says:—Power should be given to the councils to deal with any or all of the licences acquired by them under the Act in any of the following ways, viz.:—A. To abandon them altogether. B. To grant such licenses to the highest bidder under conditions to be fixed by the council, and for a period not exceeding three years. C. To carry on the trade in the present premises, or in other premises rented or purchased for the purpose under the conduct of managers, with remuneration independent of the amount of or profits on the sale of intoxicating drinks. In the two last cases the amount received for the sale of licenses, or as profit from the traffic, should be carried to a license fund, to be applied as follows:—1. To pay interest on all loans contracted for purchase of licenses or premises. 2. To create a sinking fund to extinguish loans in twenty years from date. 3. To pay all costs of management and expenses of carrying out the Act. 4. To buy up and extinguish licenses till the maximum of one in five hundred of the population has been reached. 5. The surplus, if any, to be used, first, in securing the earlier repayments of the loans contracted until these have been entirely extinguished, and then to be carried to the credit of the education rate and the poor rate in fixed proportions. Of course the power of shutting up *all* the public-houses is one that would in practice never be exercised, and must have been, I should think, introduced into the plan of Mr. Chamberlain merely for the purpose of giving it logical completeness. Now observe that against this suggestion not one of the objections can be brought which I have urged against the Permissive Bill:—Firstly, it does not introduce a machinery which we have long discarded for legislative or quasi-legislative purposes; secondly, it does not keep the question drink or no drink perpetually before the people; thirdly, it does not lead to a painful interference with anybody's habits; fourthly, it does not confiscate a penny-worth of property. It assures, on the contrary, to the publican a full and fair compensation, and thus neutralises a tremendously powerful interest; fifthly, it does not introduce a new election, with all its turmoil