

PREFACE

THERE is nothing in English history more dramatic than the story of Drink Control. For 300 years statesmen and reformers devised remedies for the abuse of alcoholic liquor which marred English efficiency and gave this country a bad pre-eminence. Most of the remedies advocated were declined by public opinion—those that were adopted proved ineffective. So ineffective were they that the view became accredited that regulation was impossible; so that nothing short of total prohibition would achieve sobriety. In trade circles, as among the more advanced temperance advocates, scientific regulation found few outspoken advocates.

To such a pass did failure to regulate the Drink Traffic descend, that in the first year of the Great War national efficiency was seriously impaired, and defeat threatened through absence of war munitions, the supply being impaired by drunkenness among munition workers.

The Government of the day, acting upon the initiative of Mr. Lloyd George, took the matter in hand vigorously. They gave a Commission—named the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic)—draconic powers to deal with the whole matter, in the interest of war efficiency.

The result of the work of this Commission was that