

petition being removed, the general level of service would deteriorate. There may be a certain amount of truth in this criticism, but my view is that, on the whole, competition in the licensed trade does more harm than good. It tends to lower rather than to raise the standard of service; it certainly aggravates undesirable features and leads to increase of intemperance.

The fundamental truth in this matter is that, under present conditions and in the present state of civilisation in England, a bad public house pays better than a good public house. Competition tempts even the most public-spirited brewer into the management that pays best. Competition has a tendency to drive him to favour bad public houses. It is not the brewer who is at fault, but the system—he is the result rather than the cause.

As regards the arguments that there is a danger that the establishment of a monopoly in each area would lead to bad service to the public, my reply is that a controlling public authority could be established of such a nature as to guard against this danger. The difficulty of control would be infinitely less than the difficulty of State management. Service to the public should therefore be better than under State control. Moreover, I incline to the view that the existence of clubs would act as an effective correction of any tendency on the part of the monopoly authority to supply bad service.

I do not attach undue importance to the view that disinterested service by the publican is an important factor in creating temperance. This theory has been greatly overdone. Whatever truth there may be in it, the proposed system would diminish the danger.