

of sale of alcoholic liquors cannot be allowed to remain indefinitely in their present unsatisfactory state. If we make no move on our own initiative, we may be compelled to do so sooner or later as the result of pressure from outside. If, as is confidently stated by many temperance advocates, the adoption of complete prohibition causes a striking improvement in the health, happiness and efficiency of the inhabitants of a country, and we find that so far as concerns *industrial* efficiency we are really being beaten in the competition for world trade by a rival nation which has adopted it, we may be driven, in a panic, to introduce extreme and unsuitable measures which have to be subsequently withdrawn. If, on the other hand, by a careful study of the progress of reform movements in other countries we are sufficiently alert to recognise in what respects they are successful and wherein they fail, and to apply this information to our own country, we may save ourselves a vast amount of wasted energy and disappointment.

We want to foresee, so far as we can, the stage which the alcohol problem will reach in 50 or 100 years' time, and by suitable legislative and other means to attain it with the minimum of friction and misdirected effort. We are not at all likely to avoid every pitfall, but each one that we can avoid will be so much to the good. The primary difficulty lies in the intelligent anticipation of the future course of the alcohol problem, as it concerns ourselves and other civilised countries, and in this book I have discussed the various directions in which progress is being made, and have endeavoured to assess their relative degrees of importance in the removal or reduction of the evils associated with the