

had difficulty in joining in whatever conversation was going on. He found that the men talked mostly about football, cricket, racing, the weather, workmates, work, and personalities, or exchanged anecdotes. The discussions were rarely about abstract questions or on religion. The bulk of the men came to the public house more, if anything, because they sought companionship than because they wanted to drink. They found the atmosphere to be genial, and to afford recreation, warmth, light, change, and refreshment. In a public house a man usually sought his "set," and kept to the same bar or "snug." As has often been said, "the 'pub' is the working-man's club." To quote Selley, "the call for a glass of beer and a friendly exchange of greeting is a sight which no one but a fanatic can condemn; but the Saturday night swilling which goes on in many parts of the country is . . . totally unnecessary and inexcusable. . . . The official statistics do not account for anything but a small proportion of the drunkenness. . . . Those who leave public houses thoroughly full and fuddled easily outnumber those who figure in convictions for drunkenness."

The public house is an established social institution which plays an important part in the life of the people, and for a long time to come it will be regarded as a public necessity. Selley considers that, though there is not so much excessive drinking as formerly, there is no evidence to show that the number of persons using public houses has decreased. With women the number is probably greater than before the war. The majority of public houses are "drink shops" pure and simple. A large proportion of them are "places where the