

CLUBS.

When considering the improvement of the public house, it is impossible to ignore the development of registered clubs, as they are tending to replace the public house to some extent. These clubs have the privilege of supplying alcoholic beverages to their members, and their numbers have increased rapidly of late. Whereas there were 6,371 registered clubs in 1903, they increased to 8,902 in 1915, and to 11,780 in 1925. Simultaneously with the increase in the number of clubs there has been a reduction in the number of public houses, owing to the cancellation of redundant licences. Between 1905 and 1919 15,239 public houses were closed, whilst 1,495 clubs, or less than a tenth as many, were opened; but between 1919 and 1925 the number of clubs opened—namely, 3,731—exceeded the number of public houses closed (3,618).* Any twenty-five persons, on formal presentation of the necessary particulars, and on payment of a fee of five shillings, can automatically obtain registration. The club, once formed, has to obey the regulations applying to public houses in respect of the hours at which intoxicating liquor is sold, but it is free from inspection by the police unless a search warrant is obtained from a magistrate, based on the complaint of at least two witnesses.

An enquiry into the membership of clubs has recently been made by the United Kingdom Alliance,* and they were able to secure returns of the membership of 10,712 clubs out of a total of 11,780 in 1925. The expenditure of all the clubs together on intoxicating

* "Alliance Year Book," 1927, p. 100.