



—Grit, of Sydney, Australia.

## The Way to Prohibit is to Prohibit, Russia Showed

Following is from a special correspondent to the New York World, dated Petrograd, February 15:

In their humble and most tenacious instincts the broad masses of the Russian people have come around again this week to begin the annual observance of the Orthodox Lenten fast. They renounce, especially their women, even the fish permitted to Catholics when their ritual prescribes for them meagre fare. Obediently and without murmur some millions of Russians in the first, fourth and seventh weeks of their fast go without milk, butter, eggs and, indeed, everything which emanates from animal life. Their diet will be cabbage, potatoes, beetroot, cucumbers, pickled mushrooms; for anything like fat they have to content themselves with the oil of sunflower seeds.

This deep, ingrained habit of self-denial as the one obvious tribute to Russian human nature to the Russian church has to be kept in the foreground of one's thoughts if any foreigner is to understand the immediate, unprotesting acceptance of so numerous a change in the daily habits of life as the sudden and total prohibition of vodka. The self-denial was put to them as an act of Christian renunciation in face of the awful visitation of war. They are ready to take it as a Divine commandment.

### VODKA ALREADY GIVEN UP

Giving up vodka was probably not such a punishment even to those who took far too much of it as many who have heard of its sway would think. By no stretch of imagination could anybody say that vodka made a man "jolly," or that it was a sociable, comforting beverage. It was potent and rank, always taken "neat" and very often out of the neck of the bottle; and its plain purpose was to give a man an immediate change of mood. If a man felt the monotony of his humble existence and the pathetic sense that grows on one living always in the drab sameness of vast Russian plains vodka would get him quickly and cheaply into another temper, mostly pugnacious, and then more melancholy than ever. Nor did the surroundings in which the man usually swallowed his vodka help to make it the occasion of social festivity.

The government drink stores—the monopolka—were of set purpose as bare and forbidding as a carpenter could make them. There was no seat or table for anybody, and nothing could be consumed on the premises. If the man who wanted his

change of mood did not gulp down his vodka on the open road outside the stores, he would adjourn to a *traktir*—the commonest kind of eating house—and here he could soon enter the land of lurid visions; or he would take it home and drink it there, when he is the worst nuisance of all.

### HOW IT WAS DONE

But though the exhibition that victims made of themselves was stark alcoholism and nothing else, it is a mistake to think that they were so completely its slaves that they lost all power of decision. Even before the days of prohibition it was almost unheard of in villages that a peasant should be drunk in the strictest weeks of the fast. The "water wagon," as you call it in America, was a religious emblem which their neighbors and the inherited force of habit compelled them to worship in fear and obedience.

For another thing, there were singularly few physical or nervous wrecks from the abuse of vodka. This is mostly due, no doubt, to the Russians being a young and sturdy race, and a far higher percentage of them than of any other people live by manual work in the open air, which helped them to work off the damaging effects of drink before it undermined their constitutions. And it was never a thing that people sipped or soaked over. Its effects were immediate and violent, and as a pathological consequence there were pretty long intervals in which its devotees had a spontaneous disgust for it.

The final blow came upon them quite unprepared. The night before the publication of the absolute ban the police in the different precincts went around among the stores that could sell vodka either to the public or to retailers, and, indeed, to all drinking shops, and sealed up the doors, front and back, pasting a bill on the windows with the word "Closed." Nobody had time to lay in a supply. There was plenty of sad surprise, but, being Russia, it ended at that. The idea of an implacable, fussy mob trying to break into the cellars and help themselves is so utterly impossible in Russia that nobody who has ever lived here for any time ever dreamed of expecting such an incident.

### GOOD RESULTS QUICKLY FELT

No doubt many of the reservists and, still more, their friends would have been glad of a dram at parting, but as soon as they knew that they could not have it there was a bigger

consumption of food and tea instead. The army was and is too eager to do its very best to trouble its soul about the vodka question; it goes without and is cheerful. As for the change of mood, which was the desideratum in the old thirsty days, the war itself and the cause for which they are fighting are enough exaltation.

The best results of the prohibition came out first in the big cities. The panorama of the war and its periods of dramatic excitement made the people very gregarious. It was a new thing for them to meet in the presence of the most intense crisis in the world and to feel themselves part of it. Had vodka been accessible it would have been an unqualified curse; generous excitement would have degenerated into nervous passion. The abstinence was made easier by being applied inflexibly to rich and poor. For some weeks light wines were obtainable, but they, too, have gone the way of everything else that contained alcohol. Only the foreign embassies are allowed the privilege of obtaining wine through a special permit issued for each separate occasion by the administrative authorities; and they are believed to have the decency to exercise their privilege in moderation. An ambassador is the immediate personal emissary of his sovereign, and an invitation to dine with him is equivalent to a social "command" from his king to one of his subjects, and only actual ill-health is accepted as an excuse for absence; any previous invitation for the same night must be set aside. But all around even the semblance of social feasting is set aside.

### MAY NOT EFFECT REVENUE

It is not at all clear that the revenue will suffer a permanent heavy loss by the renunciation. There is, of course, an enormous dislocation from the last budget accounts, but the money that went in vodka is still somewhere about the country. The savings banks show great increases in deposits all over the empire from here to Vladivostok and from Archangel to Odessa. The clothing trade has been thriving and spreading extraordinarily since the prohibition. The long process under the Stolpin land act by which the peasants were gradually buying up their sectional holdings as their absolute property has been helped to an incalculable extent by the exclusion of the vodka trade and the consequent circulation of money for punctual payments to the land banks.

So far from regretting the downfall of King Vodka, the very people who yielded sway to him realize now that the thing could have been done successfully only by one sudden stroke and that legislative amendments and limitations would never have protected the people in the way that they are shielded by this absolute act.—New York World.

### ENGLAND MAY BE "DRY"

A London cablegram to the Washington Post, under date of March 29, says: "We are fighting Germany, Austria and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink," said David Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer, replying today to a deputation of the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, the members of which were unanimous in urging that, in order to meet the national requirements at the present time, there should be a total prohibition during the period of the war of the sale of intoxicating liquors.

This should apply not only to public houses, but also to private clubs, so as to operate equally with all classes of the community.

It was stated that despite the fact

that work was being carried on night and day, seven days in the week, the total working time on the average in British shipyards was actually less than before the war and the average productiveness had decreased. There were many men doing splendid and strenuous work, but many did not even approximate full time, thus disastrously reducing the average.

Notwithstanding the curtailment of the hours they are allowed to keep open, the receipts of the public houses in the neighborhood of the shipyards had greatly increased, in some cases 40 per cent. An instance of a battleship coming in for immediate repairs was cited. She was delayed a whole day through the absence of riveters, who were carousing.

### COUNTRY REALIZES SITUATION

The chancellor of the exchequer said the government had not heretofore taken more drastic action on the liquor question because it needed to be assured that it was not going adverse to public sentiment. But now he was sure the country was beginning to realize the gravity of the situation.

"I have a growing conviction, based on accumulating evidence," continued the chancellor, "that nothing but root and branch methods would be of the slightest avail. I believe it is the general feeling that if we are to settle German militarism we must first of all settle with drink."

Mr. Lloyd George intimated that Lord Kitchener, the secretary for war, and Field Marshal French, in command of the British expeditionary forces on the continent, were of the same opinion, and he promised to lay the statements of the deputation before the cabinet. He said, in conclusion:

"I had the privilege of an audience with his majesty this morning, and I am permitted by him to say that he is very deeply concerned on this question—very deeply concerned—and the concern which is felt by him, I am certain, is shared by all his subjects in this country."—Washington Post.

### King of England Quits Drinking; Bars Liquors in Royal Houses

London, April 5.—Teetotalism will be enforced in all the king's households beginning Wednesday. An official announcement just issued, dated April 6, says:

"By the king's command no wines or spirits will be consumed in any of his majesty's houses after today."

### GOVERNMENT AGENTS DESTROY LIQUOR

Bemidji, Minn., April 2nd.—Acting under orders from Cato Sells, commissioner of Indian affairs, government agents, directed by Henry A. Larson, chief special officer for the suppression of the liquor traffic among the Indians, seized the Bemidji brewery and emptied great vats containing seven car loads of beer into the streets. The beer, valued at forty-five hundred dollars, flowed down the gutters and into the lake. Men in rubber boots waded in beer one foot deep on the brewery floors, while policemen kept the crowds back.

The beer was confiscated because of the failure of the brewery company to comply with the Chippewa Treaty of 1855 as recently construed by the supreme court of the United States.—News Tribune, Duluth, Minn.

### CURT

Skinum—I want to interest you in a mining proposition. It's a good thing.

Flubdub—Perhaps it is; but I'm not.—Judge.