

422. A mischief of a basic character is also alleged—viz., the sale of alcoholic liquor as an ordinary article of commerce for private profit. It is alleged that, if the demand were not stimulated, or permitted to be stimulated, and that if alcoholic liquor were available only to meet such demand as exists, or would exist, without stimulation, most of the mischief or evils would disappear. It is also alleged that this result can only be brought about if the incentive to trade in alcoholic liquor for private profit is removed and if, to that end, the manufacture and sale of liquor is placed in the hands of the State or of some public corporation or corporations acting on behalf of the State.

CHAPTER 19.—MISCHIEFS RELATING TO CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR

423. The total consumption of beer and the total quantity entered at the Customs for consumption of spirits and of wine and in each case the quantity per head are set out below for the years 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, for the depression years of 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934, and for the year 1940 (R. 34).

Beer, Spirits, and Wine entered at Customs for Consumption, 1900 to 1940

Year.	Beer.		Spirits.		Wine.	
	Total for Consumption.	Quantity per Head.	Quantity entered for Consumption at Customs.	Quantity per Head.	Quantity entered for Consumption at Customs.	Quantity per Head.
	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.
1900 ..	6,986,900	8·696	549,932	0·684	116,188	0·145
1910 ..	9,671,030	9·294	767,620	0·737	153,430	0·147
1920 ..	15,106,653	12·288	947·660	0·771	239,880	0·195
1930 ..	12,312,823	8·251	569·656	0·283	198,377	0·133
1931 ..	10,124,849	6·687	378,874	0·250	134,160	0·089
1932 ..	8,868,316	5·807	323,308	0·212	105,725	0·069
1933 ..	8,622,690	5·601	316,755	0·206	116,390	0·076
1934 ..	9,605,721	6·191	324,794	0·209	135,908	0·088
1940 ..	18,369,952	11·220	402,046	0·246	107,355	0·066

424. It is thus apparent that, while the quantity of beer consumed in 1940 has approached three times the quantity consumed in 1900, the consumption of spirits and of wine has steadily declined. It is also apparent that, when money was in short supply during the depression, the consumption of alcoholic liquors decreased rapidly.

425. The convictions for drunkenness and related offences rose from 103·4 per 10,000 of population in 1902 to 120·6 per 10,000 in 1914. During the war of 1914–18, the convictions for these offences declined as follows (in each case per 10,000): In 1915, 117·9; in 1916, 97·3; in 1917 (the year 6 o'clock closing began), 78·3; in 1918, 63·5. It should be noted that a fall of nearly 20 per 10,000 had occurred between 1915 and 1916, before 6 o'clock closing began to operate.

From 1919 to 1921 (inclusive) the figures per 10,000 were as follows: 67·6; 71·6; and 69. There was a big fall to 43·4 in the depression year of 1922. The figures rose to 58·6 in 1925 and then, for the most part, fell gradually to 21·6 per 10,000 in 1935. The figure in the boom year of 1929 was 46·3. The figures during the depression years of 1931–35 (inclusive and in each case, as before, per 10,000) were as follows: For 1931, 32·1; for 1932, 26·7; for 1933, 23·3; for 1934, 22·3; and for 1935, 21·6.