

Littlehampton Observer

2nd December 1914 page 8

THE NEW BEER WAR TAX.

SIR.—I was astonished to read the statement of Mr. Lloyd George that the brewers had not objected to the unfair war tax which has been placed upon beer.

The indignation of the trade, as a whole, is only to be equalled by the indignation of the beer-drinking public.

To any thinking mind the following output of the Portsmouth United Breweries for the second and fourth weeks in November, the first entirely without the war tax, and the second with the war tax, will prove that the increase is not going to realise to the Exchequer the amount anticipated by the Chancellor.

For the week ended November 14th, 1914, 2,455 barrels at 7s. 9d. duty amounts to £951.

For the week ended November 28th, 1914, 897 barrels at 7s. 9d. plus 15s. 3d. amounts to £1,031.

This gives Mr. Lloyd George an increase of £80 on one week, and for this £80 a sound business is destroyed, the property depreciated to at least one-fifth of its original value, salaries reduced, and the number of employees reduced to the extent of 120.

In addition to this there are no fewer than 220 customers who are traders seriously injured, with nothing but ruin staring them in the face.

Speaking for one brewery alone, is it worth £80 per week to destroy the commercial value of a sound business?

Is it worth £80 to destroy the financial soundness of 220 honest traders who endeavour to be loyal and support their country on all occasions?

And may I ask, is it worth the relatively paltry sum to destroy a national business, to put an end to honest beer-drinking, and to encourage the working men to increase spirit drinking, which has already taken place?

The United States Legislation is doing everything in its power to discourage spirit drinking and to promote the use of beer, which is looked upon as food, and which is recognised by users of beer in this country in the same light.

I am,
 Your obedient Servant,
 W. T. DUPREE.

Craneswater,
 Portsmouth. November 30th, 1914.

Chichester Observer

9th December 1914 page 7

THE NEW BEER WAR TAX.

SIR.—In times of "piping peace" public houses and music halls are regarded as our twin national safety valves. They afford a vent for the exuberance of those patriots whose "deeds of daring do" begin and end at the front—of the bar.

What your correspondent, Mr. W. T. Dupree, terms "honest beer-drinking" certainly engenders verbosity, but judging by his sentiments it does not inspire sufficient public spirit to part with "a baubee" (Scotch half-penny) that fatal coin for which the Scotch are said to have sold their King, and for begrudging which "honest beer-drinkers" are willing to sell our sacred cause of liberty and empire.

"When t' drink's in t' wit's out," hence the aforesaid loud demands of "honest beer drinkers" for national efficiency and the scorn with which they mouthed the hated word economy.

But, oh Great Bacchus, what a change comes o'er the spirit of their dreams when the bill in the guise of a half-penny per half pint pops out of the froth with the awful cry—"Your King and country wants ME"!

Alas that in such a moment "honest beer drinking" should cease to cheer and inebriate. The spirit no doubt is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Mr. W. T. Dupree loses sight of the great cause in deploring the small effect on his trade. Let me assure him there are others who suffer, but disdain to whine in face of the enemy, especially while millions of men, far from groaning over having to part with a half-penny, are sacrificing life and limb in the sacred cause of liberty. In such a cause we like to pay, pay, pay, and never leave off smiling.

Once Mr. Dupree thinks of the noble example set by our French and Russian allies in the cause of temperance the thought of those sacrificed millions of pounds will blot out of his mind the £80 which he deems lost, though it is to be spent to protect his rights as a Briton.

Mr. Dupree asks "Is it worth the relatively paltry sum to destroy a national business"? If that question were answered by a plebiscite at the present crisis it is a hundred to one that it would be in the affirmative, for a few of the happy results would be less work for our police and magistrates, less poverty, depravity and national disgrace, and more food, clothing, and decent homes for our women and children.

If, as Mr. Dupree asserts, "The tax on beer encourages working men to increase spirit drinking" then this fact should prove a profitable "hen roost" to Mr. Lloyd George, who should lose no time in increasing the spirit tax so as to put a stop to the evil of which your correspondent so justly complains.

Mr. Dupree should heap on singing to his "honest beer drinkers"—

"Beer, beer, glorious beer,
 Up with the sale of it
 Down with a pail of it"
 so as to supply "the silver bullet" which will preserve our Empire.

Yours truly,
 JEROME DEIGMAN.
 North Bersted, December 2nd, 1914.