

Worthing Gazette 10th March 1915 page 3

WAR AND DRINKING.

**A Correspondent's Protest Against
Gross Exaggerations.**

To the Editor of the GAZETTE.

Sir,—Is Mr. Lloyd George's statement, "We have got great powers to deal with drink and we mean to use them," to be considered to be in any way connected with the teetotal campaign which has been going on ever since the outbreak of War, based on gross exaggerations with regard to alleged excessive drinking on the part of our sailors and soldiers and their wives?

Only the other day a section of Sussex teetotalers affirmed by resolution that

"the numerous facilities still offered to our soldiers, their wives, and the public generally, in public-houses, Clubs, and Military Canteens, for the consumption of intoxicating drink . . . encourage unnecessary and wasteful expenditure, have led to rioting and violent deaths, and are acknowledged by high Military, Civil, and Medical authorities as presenting an insurmountable barrier to complete efficiency and public order;"

and "further drastic restrictions of the sale of intoxicating liquors, especially in Training Camps and Military areas," were urged.

Now, recent Brewster Sessions have proved, what responsible officials have stated ever since the outbreak of War, that in the vast majority of places throughout the country there had been a substantial reduction in the cases of drunkenness, a reduction shared by Sussex, with its many thousands of soldier guests.

In the Steyning Division, which includes Shoreham Camp, drunkenness charges fell from fifty-three the previous year to thirty-two; in some districts of Sussex the proportion was still better.

Turning to an inspired organ of the "advanced" section, to find if possible what are the hopes of this teetotal campaign, one reads that

"If all public-houses and Clubs were closed for the sale of alcohol at nine o'clock, in accord with one general curfew policy, such restrictions would, no doubt, with some grumbling at first, soon settle down into a serviceable usage."

Did not a Bishop once say he would sooner see England free than sober? And was it not Mr. Lloyd George who once described beer, on the new taxation of which he is relying to help pay for the War, as a temperance drink?

ALBERT THOMAS.