

By no means were all counter-temperance organisations politically Conservative. Some, such as the Consumers Defence League (CDL), were avowedly apolitical. It was specifically formed to promote: 'proper and adequate accommodation in well-ordered premises which anyone may enter with the object not of excess but of reasonable refreshment and sociability'.²²⁰ But the very existence of bodies such as the CDL shifted the balance of political polemics against regulation. That made the job of Conservative anti-temperance politicians so much easier. Speaking to the Annual Dinner of the Allied Brewers Traders' Association in 1930, Winston Churchill, Member of Parliament, 'congratulated' the nation for its recent achievement in removing 'the whole drink traffic question . . . from the realm of controversial British party politics'. This was scarcely true. But in the immediate wake of his speech, the Conference of the Association of Conservative Clubs set about lobbying both party and Parliament for a significant relaxation in existing laws, above all, for the reduction of taxation on beer and the end to petty restrictions on its sale in clubs. Sir Robert Blaker, Tory Member for Spelthorne, expressed what had become an increasingly common view by 1933, when he reflected on 'the great amount of soreness . . . shared . . . amongst

²²⁰ Anon., 'Consuming and Licensing Commission: Appointment of Royal Commission on Licensing and Consumers' Defence League', *The Times*, 25 October 1929.

decent, sober, people at the restrictions [in these matters] still placed upon them today'.²²¹

²²¹ Anon., 'Mr Churchill's Visit to America: Views of Prohibition', *The Times*, 18 March 1930; anon., 'Licensing Hours', *The Times*, 9 December 1933.

From S. J. D. Green, "The Passing of Protestant England: Secularisation and Social Change, c.1920-1960", pp. 173, 174 (2011)