

who have come into the enjoyment of them. But at the same time these authorities show that the savings banks' deposits and the industrial insurance returns are also growing even more rapidly than the population. The funds thus conserved are none the less capital though owned by the multitude of workers and administered by commissioners or insurance directors. They enter into the service of the State as the basis of employment for the people just as much as if they were funds controlled and directed by a millionaire. But they are the capital of the industrious and the provident. And in these directions we can see the beneficial accumulation of funds which are available for the alleviation of suffering and the provision of comfort in the inevitable time of want. |

(b.) At the rate of 120 words a minute. Takes 10 minutes.

Well, gentlemen, having told you of the opposition which is being offered to the measures which we are proposing, I daresay it will be asked in many a quarter, "Why have you added to your difficulties by a measure which you have introduced in connection with the Budget—namely, a measure which, to a certain extent, deals with the licensing question? Why should you have embarked on a measure of that thorny character at a time when you have plenty to do?" Although I have detained you long enough already, I ask to be allowed on this question to say a few words, very earnest words, because I feel very strongly on the question.

1 Some of you may possibly have done me the honour to read the speech in which I introduced the Budget, or, if not, you have seen some epitomes of it. They will have told you that one of the chief features of the economic conditions of the past year has been the immense consumption of alcoholic liquors. There was a vast increase in the quantities of spirits and beer which had been drunk. It may also have appeared to you that it was clear that spirits would bear an additional duty, and under these circumstances, looking to the effect made upon our minds, and, as we believed, an effect which would be made on the minds of the country, we thought that the moment had come | to see whether some practical common-sense step could not be taken to arrest the increase in the number of houses selling alcoholic drink. We thought the moment had come, and that we should receive support almost from all sides in dealing with this difficult question. The temperance party have done their best for years and years, but since the time when Lord Aberdare's Bill failed no real progress has been made in the direction of diminishing the number of licensed houses. We thought, and we think, that the party of temperance will be sensible enough to go into any arrangement which will offer the hope of diminishing the number of houses which tempt to drink. We most of us | in this room, I daresay, are of opinion that there ought to be, and that it is proper that there should be, a sufficient number of places where beer and spirits are sold to meet the legitimate necessities of any neighbourhood. But we are equally clear that they ought not to be multiplied to a degree which constitutes an abuse. That being so, we thought that we could propose measures to the House which, without being either against the extreme doctrines of the temperance party, or without treading upon the legitimate interest of the public, might promote the great cause of temperance. We have not done that which many of our critics have declared we have done. I myself have | lately, during the past few days, when I have gone to the House of Commons—I have been buried in a vast avalanche of letters, and I have had to fight my way through a yellow fog of telegrams. Every temperance association in the country has been bombarding me and my colleagues. (A voice: "Serve you right.") Yes, it would have served us right if they had issued their telegrams and written their letters when they had seen our proposals. But they were sent before they had seen them; that is the interesting point. And they charge us with having introduced a novel and dangerous recognition of vested interests. That which we have proposed is neither novel nor is it | dangerous. It is supposed that in our Bill we offer compensation to every publican. We do no such thing. No, we leave the present law, with regard to the discretion of the licenses, precisely where it is. If the Justices, acting judicially, consider that they ought not to renew a license, they will retain the same discretion which they have exercised hitherto, and there will be no compensation whatever for the suppression of such a license. The position of the Justices will be precisely the same. But what we do is to give to the County Councils the power to diminish, side by side with any action which may be taken by the Justices—the power to diminish the number | of licenses by purchasing the goodwill of the house. I am almost sorry, and I think I have made a blunder in reserving this part of my speech for the end, because I am anxious that it should be thoroughly understood. We are creating no new rights; more than that, we have a clause in our Bill that no proceedings under that Bill should create any greater interest in any public-house, or should increase its value as compared with its value before it has passed. We have taken care that no action of ours should, so to speak, increase against the public the value of the public-house. That we have done for the protection of the public, but we do | desire and we ask the co-operation of the temperance party in this behalf. We do desire that no fanaticism, no sticking for any particular point, no theoretical objection should impair us in our determined resolution to attempt to diminish the number of licensed houses. We are exceedingly desirous of diminishing the number of public-houses, and if our friends defeat our Bill theirs will be absolutely fruitless and vain, and so I ask the party of temperance to co-operate if they can with the Government and to bring no technical objection forward like this, but to deal with it as practical men. We wish to celebrate the alliance which has existed for four years by beneficent legislation. You heard Mr. Lea, | an advanced Liberal, say that he was satisfied with much that the Government has done. We believe that we have been able to add a goodly list of measures to the statute-book, and we are not content to leave that where it is. We intend to continue to add to that list if we can. We feel that an immense obligation is imposed upon us by our