

Liquor and ‘Nation-Building’

Liquor is one of the greatest enemies of nation. Every now and then the leaders appeal to the public to give up this bad habit because it interferes with the nation-building activities. This week the president of Kenya threatened to close the bars of a certain area if the people of that locality did not give up drinking.

The poisonous effects of liquor on the health and family life of an individual are too obvious to need any description. Also, it is common knowledge that liquor is one of the main causes of absenteeism in the factories and offices, resulting in thousands and thousands of lost man-days. Further, it is admitted that drunk drivers are responsible for an unbelievable ratio of road accidents, resulting in loss of limbs and lives. And every social worker and priest knows that this abominable habit is the direct cause of great many cases of broken-up families, frustrated children and poverty-ridden homes.

Liquor, thus, has these disturbing effects on the public’s health, productivity, prosperity and happiness. Yet, one is amazed to see in the nation’s newspapers advertisements urging people to drink liquor “to help in the nation-building” But I can not see any connection between drinking and nation-building.

If ‘nation’ means ‘brewery’, then of course drinking will help it. But I have not seen ‘nation’ defined as ‘brewery’ in any dictionary. If ‘nation-building’ means ‘being absent on Monday because of Sunday’s hangover’, then the advertisers are right. But is this definition correct? If a man ‘builds the nation’ by reaching home after mid-night, by beating his wife and children, by keeping them hungry, then the drunkards would be regarded as the great nation-builders, no doubt. But neither society nor the government would accept this meaning.

Such advertisements and statements grossly mislead the nation. It is high time that people were protected from such misleading advertisement.

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