

No. 16.

Mr. E. C. MOULDEY to Mr. Commissioner E. C. J. STEVENS.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 31st May, 1880.

Will you please bring this subject before the Board of Commissioners of Local Industries and Productions? I have been a considerable loser during the past few years, caused by the alteration of the Licensing Act. I have been ten years a manufacturer of home-made wine, and established a good business in that line, and have spent more than £1,000 in building work-rooms, cellars, storehouses, and plant for carrying on a large trade. The quantity of wine made by me the last season previous to the altering of the said Act was about 2,000 gallons; since then I have not made any, as my business was entirely put a stop to by the above Act. I have thousands of gallons of wine on hand; it has been dead stock for years, and will be still, unless the Licensing Act will permit of selling by the single bottle. This class of wine is usually bought by the working-people, and not sold by the publicans. In England such wine is sold by confectioners and grocers, and is called British wine or fruit-wine, and is retailed at 1s. per bottle, and no restriction is placed on the sale of it. The same liberty was given in New Zealand till the altering of the Licensing Act, which now prohibits the sale of any wine in less quantities than two gallons without a license. This ought not to apply to home-made wine. I do not think it ever was intended to, but it has: no one but a publican can now sell a bottle of raspberry, ginger, currant, or orange wine. This is an act of injustice to the manufacturer of such wine. It puts a stop to the industry altogether. Another reason why this industry should be encouraged is, that a market is found for a large quantity of surplus fruit, such as is grown in the south of New Zealand.

Trusting you will give this your attention,

I have, &c.,

E. C. MOULDEY.

No. 17.

Mr. JAMES SMITH to Mr. Commissioner E. C. J. Stevens, Wellington.

SIR,—

New Street, Nelson, 20th July, 1880.

I received a copy of the Supplementary Order Paper No. 21, per favour of Mr. Acton B. Adams, from which I observe that you are the mover of the clause in the new Licensing Bill with reference to New Zealand wines. In order to render you assistance in that matter I enclose full details of my manufacture since 1872, together with copy of awards and prizes to me; and also there have been four other prizes awarded at the Sydney Exhibition, 1880—namely, one first, one second, and two third prizes—in all thirteen first-class prizes, including four medals. These awards will show the progress and character of the wines that I manufacture. Were they not worthy of these awards I feel certain they would never have been bestowed; and I am also sure that no industry of that kind in New Zealand has made such rapid progress, irrespective of any bonuses or subsidies, as our own colonial-made wines; and had they not been locked up so by the Government it would have been ten times more; and I shall show you my reasons, as follow:—

Firstly, the Government actually compelled the wine-manufacturer to pay two licenses in each year for the manufacture of his own crops.

Secondly, although paying two licenses, they deprived him from the sale of his wine by preventing him from selling less than two gallons, and keeping him under the same restriction as an importer, with the same penalty in respect to selling less than two gallons, which penalty is £50.

If this is the protection which is given to local industries, the sooner it is abolished the better, or else give them notice to cease manufacturing. Many scores of the sick have sent to my store for a single bottle or even two of wine, and I had to refuse them, well knowing that I could not sell less than two gallons (twelve bottles); and the answer I received from them was simply that they could not afford to purchase two gallons; and I had to make them a present under such circumstances. And I may add that no longer since than last Friday (16th instant) I gave three bottles of wine to a sick lady who could not afford to pay for more; I myself being of hope that the law would be altered, enabling me to charge, before the end of the present session. There has never been a better industry started in the colony were it properly looked after. It creates a good market for very large quantities of fruit; it employs labour in three or four ways; it brings revenue to the Customs for sugar; it shows a consumption of bottles that would otherwise be destroyed; and also renders employment to the cooper and carter, shipping and wharfage. Now, Sir, I think that such an industry should have more freedom and encouragement granted. I observe from the reports of the House printed in the newspapers that an honorable gentleman spoke in hard terms, endeavouring to discourage New Zealand wines. Very likely he may have been right to a certain extent. No doubt there has been a great deal of rubbish made in the way of wines in New Zealand. There are wines made in this city that I believe would give any one the colic; but I am proud to say that, owing to their inferior quality, they have worked themselves out of the market. I myself was the last one among thirteen so-called manufacturers who came into the market, and am the only one among the lot who has maintained a position. I am of opinion that the said honorable gentleman ought to have thought twice before he tried to blacken the whole of the manufacture of New Zealand through him getting the "colic" from one manufacture. Should that honorable gentleman favour me with an order, I am sure that I can supply him with an article that would not give him the "colic," unless he is subject to that complaint. During the last eight years I have manufactured 890 quarter-casks of wine, and should be able to make that quantity annually if encouragement were held out.

Trusting that I am not taking up too much of your valuable time,

I have, &c.,

JAMES SMITH.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, PHILADELPHIA, 1876, REPORT.

THE United States Centennial Commission has examined the report of the Judges, and accepted the following reasons, and decreed an award in conformity therewith:—