

95. Such as the clause prohibiting the sale of liquor to a Native woman?—On my last trip to Otorohanga by train I saw two King-country women at Te Awamutu Railway-station in such a disgraceful state of drunkenness that I was surprised that they were allowed on the train, and there is no sly-grog selling in that district.

96. It has not had the effect of stopping the sale of liquor to Native women?—Only in degree.

97. *Mr. Rhodes.*] Can you speak as to the quality of the liquor in the King-country?—I had a discussion with a man on the train on the way down, and he had had three drinks—laager beer the first, Gaelic whisky the second, and English beer for the third. He said “he had been treated very well.” I believe that Gaelic whisky is the favourite liquor up there.

98. Then the liquor is of very fair quality?—Yes, I believe so. I do not believe it to be very inferior.

99. We have heard that whisky was 7s. 6d. per gallon?—I have not heard that; it might have been so when there was a still there.

100. Then there was a still there?—There was one when the tunnel was in course of construction; but I do not think that an illicit still exists now. I do not think there has ever been one worthy of the name.

101. As far as your knowledge goes, the liquor is of good or fair quality?—Yes.

102. *The Chairman.*] You know Mr. Ngata?—No; I have not met him.

103. You have heard of him?—Yes.

104. You cannot say of your knowledge whether he was sent to report or not?—No, I cannot.

105. Do you know yourself whether the chiefs who petitioned for prohibition petitioned for the establishment of licenses before they died—that is, for the sale of liquor?—I think they did; but they never brought these petitions before me.

106. I suppose you know that section 25 of the “Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act, 1895,” protects Native women in the King-country?—No, I did not know that.

107. Still, of course, it is only the sale to women in hotels. Are the women more drunken there than in any other localities?—I am inclined to think that they drink less.

107A. Do you know whether sly-grog selling is carried on to any great extent in the boarding-houses?—Yes; it is.

108. Do you think that convictions for sly-grog selling have been a deterrent for it, or the opposite?—Undoubtedly, a deterrent. Some of those fined have stopped absolutely.

109. Do you know the King-country well? What is about the number of the Native population and the European population in that particular part of the King-country that is prohibited, or, rather, supposed to be prohibited?—I think, roughly, that the Native population would be two thousand, European population about the same—of course, allowing for the navvies and other labourers in the district.

110. What is the general habit of the Waikatos: are they a more sober lot than the other tribes?—I do not know that I am in a position to speak on that point.

111. Have you ever heard that the King Natives were the most drunken tribe in New Zealand?—Yes; I have heard that, but I did not agree with it.

112. Is there no provision as to the quantity of liquor a man may have in his possession in the King-country?—Yes; I believe there is something to that effect, but, judging by the quantity taken up, it does not seem to have had much effect.

113. Then, in your opinion, it would be worse to admit liquor than that the present state of affairs should be allowed to go as it is?—I am in favour of a Prohibition Act that would help to prohibit. I think the present position of affairs is very unsatisfactory.

114. Then, if you altered the present law, you would have to take a vote of the people?—No; I do not think that advisable.

115. Then, how would you treat these people in that locality: differently to any others? You must amend the law to do so?—To place them on an equality with the rest of the people in the colony you would require to alter the law, so that if an increase in licenses was carried in the Waikato Licensing District as a whole the increase could take place in the part of the district known as the King-country; that is the only alteration that would be required.

116. Do you think it is fair to have one little spot blocked? Is it your opinion that it would be unwise to give people in that locality the opportunity of saying “Yes” or “No”?—Well, I have already stated that I should like it deferred until we have a more settled population. The people who would settle it now have no interest in the district.

117. Then, the two thousand is a floating population?—Yes; it is chiefly a floating population.

118. But the King-country have had the power to vote for an increase or otherwise; the King-country is part of a licensing district, is it not?—Yes; of course, we have always voted on the licensing question for increase or to remain the same, the same as other districts.

119. You have that now?—If the electorate voted for increase it would not apply to the King country. The King-country gives a much larger vote for increases than the rest of the Waikato.

120. You are not certain whether the petition asking for prohibition also asked for the prohibition of land-selling?—I feel absolutely certain in my own mind that there were two distinct petitions—the first, in 1883, from the Ngatimaniapoto tribe *re* land, liquor, and other matters; the second, in 1884, originating from the Temperance party, and only referring to the prohibition of the sale of liquor in the King-country. I am quite sure on that point.

121. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] You spoke of the population there being two thousand, and described the European population as a floating population?—Yes; chiefly a floating population. There are a number of men belonging to your department there.