



The Victorian excise duty on beer for November alone amounted to £14,473. The treasury of that colony, therefore, benefits to the extent of nearly £200,000 a year by this tax. The New Zealand Treasury benefits proportionately, and from a financial point of view it would be madness to sacrifice this income.

It is a peculiar coincidence that the present Lord Mayor of London is a large mineral water merchant, while his predecessor was in the whisky business in a large way. This is on the American or Scotch principle, whisky first and water afterwards. But as Londoners like to mix their whisky and water, it is a pity the two gentlemen couldn't have held office at the same time.

The pictures and statuettes in the commercial and smoking-room of the Royal Mail Hotel have recently been undergoing a thorough regilding, and at present almost dazzle the visitor with their golden splendor. We believe that the work has been done by an English dilettante of artistic proclivities now resident in the hotel, who thus amuses himself when time hangs heavy on his hands.

The alterations which have been in progress at the St. Helier's Bay Hotel (Mr S. C. Caulton) are very nearly completed, and it is expected that everything will be in apple-pie order by Christmas time. There has been considerable expense involved in bringing about the many improvements, and now this pleasurable summer resort will be even more attractive than of yore.

In our last issue we neglected publishing the transfer of licenses granted by the Palmerston North Licensing Committee at their last quarterly meeting. They were as follows:—Princess Hotel, from Marion Clifford to Keady O'Leary; Clarendon Hotel, from George Onimette to F. J. Tasker (Mr Henley); Empire Hotel, from W. M. Jameson to Helena Mary Burnett; Masonic Hotel, Ashurst, from James Williams to James Vile (Mr Baker); Club Hotel, Percy A. Herman to William Smith; Commercial Hotel, Ashurst, from George Hannselle to J. McCarthy; Royal Hotel, Bunnythorpe, from Symon Glogoski to James Dillon (Mr Innis).



When the appeal case against the convictions for sly-grog selling at Clinton and Balclutha were called on at the Supreme Court, Dunedin, the Crown Solicitor said that he had on the previous day received intimation of the discontinuance of the appeals. Seven guineas costs were given against each appellant.

If the decision given against an Invercargill publican a few weeks ago is to be carried out in spirit in future decisions, it will be inadvisable even to serve a cup of tea or a glass of milk after closing hours. It seems that Mr Blackham, hotelkeeper, served some guests with cider after closing time, and was charged with selling beer after hours. The defence was that the liquid consumed was cider, and as counsel refused to agree to the information being amended the case was dismissed. A fresh charge of selling cider, however, was immediately laid, and the defendant was fined £2 and costs, and his license endorsed. Wherefore, in Invercargill, it would be dangerous to sell a man even a cup of salts and senna after eleven o'clock.

It will be remembered in connection with the Exhibition bar case that Mr Brabant, the chairman of the Licensing Committee, promised to give his written judgment on Tuesday morning. This would have enabled Mr Nicholson to bring it before the Supreme Court and gave the matter tested in Chambers. Mr Nicholson applied for the decision on Tuesday, but was put off. He applied again in the afternoon, but was kept waiting until five minutes after three, when the written decision was handed to him. Of course this was just five minutes too late to bring it into the Supreme Court before next February, when naturally the decision will be of no practical use, except as a precedent in case we have another Exhibition. Now Mr Brabant knew what the written decision was for, as he had been officially advised at the meeting, and his action in delaying its delivery until it was too late to be of service, after having promised to have it finished in time, admits of but two conclusions. Either he did it to burke inquiry, or he was afraid to have his decision reviewed in the Supreme Court. In either case his attitude is hardly an enviable one.

At last we know what the lay members of the Licensing Committee are really elected for. They are intended to act as a high-class audience, critical possibly, but very attentive, while the Chairman discourses on matters connected with the Trade, educates them on legal points, and if he is in a particularly good humor perhaps explains to them why he has decided that certain things should be done. The restriction of silence having been removed, they next adopt the attitude of a Greek chorus, and re-echo and endorse the sentiments and decisions he has arrived at. Occasionally, to vary the monotony, one or two, or possibly four, as an "expression of opinion" are allowed to say a few words, and even vote against the Chairman's dictum, but this exercise, which is seldom indulged in, is mere airy persiflage, as what the Chairman says, in the end, always "goes." It is a very pretty little Kindergarten kind of arrangement, and would look very nice and amusing on the stage, but in hard, practical business life proceedings of so farcical nature are apt to be irritating, and electors would like to know the meaning of the burlesque.

Sly-grog selling, like the poor, "is always with us."

Egyptian drink for Tommy Atkins returned from the Soudan—Sirdar and B.

According to statistics, moderate drinkers make the best risks for life insurance companies.

decided that there is to be no bar in the Exhibition building, either for the sale of beer or wine.

John Grey and Sons, mineral water manufacturers, have made an excellent display with their exhibit at the Exhibition.

Mr Michaels should do a good trade at the Wynyard Arms Hotel while the Exhibition is in swing, especially now that it has been ultimately

One of the barmen at the Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington, stated that £6 or £7 was stolen from the till while the fire was in progress.

Captain Kelmsley, of the Wellington Fire Brigade, claims that all hotels should have flexible ladders for each room.

Very few transfers of licenses during the last week or two; hotelkeepers do not like the idea of changing during the festive season.

Burglars entered the Imperial Hotel, Wellington, broke open the safe, and stole £50 in cash and small articles worth about £5.

The improvements at the Thistle Hotel are very nearly completed, and Mr Harry Ellison is to be congratulated on the present appearance of his hostelry.

Big alterations are being made at Mr Alfred Kidd's Commercial Hotel in Shortland Street. Full particulars of the improvements contemplated will appear in a future issue.

At the quarterly meeting of the Palmerston North Licensing Committee the police reports on the various hotels in the district, with one exception, were very favorable.

There are 89 million gallons of Scotch whisky lying idle in bond owing, Mr Dewar says, to the difficulty of finding a sufficient supply of suitable water with which to mix the spirit.

The N.Z. Times, in referring to the Royal Oak Hotel fire, hints that an understanding exists between the Council and the Brigade to whitewash each other.

Mr W. Mowbray reports that Mrs Dixon, formerly of the New Lynn Hotel, has taken over the Diggers' Rest Hotel at Coromandel. This hotel has been for some time under the management of Mr Charles Wade.

In speaking of the enormous amount of tea consumed in the colonies, the National says:—"People who will strong black tea at every meal would be far better if they were drinking beer, provided it was light and of good quality."

Mr S. C. Caulton, of St. Helier's Bay, is having an excellent steamboat time-table card printed, with a picture of his hotel in the centre. It will prove very convenient for consultation to frequenters of the Bay.

Mr Samuel Gilmer, licensee of the Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington, said at the inquest that he had never given the subject of a possible fire five minutes consideration, so safe did he consider the building.

Mr Andrew Usher, the great Edinburgh brewer, has died from an internal cancer. Three years ago he gave £100,000 to the city of Edinburgh for the erection of a music hall, but he has not lived to see the work entered upon.

It is claimed that the Licensing Committee never under any circumstances or at any time offered Mr M. Foley a conditional license for seven days, and that Mr Brabant was mistaken when he stated that such was the case.

The police appear to be keen on hunting down sly-grog shanties in the King Country. Two cases are to come on for hearing at Te Awamutu before Captain Jackson, S.M. Well, they had better be engaged in that work than persecuting respectable city publicans.

Mr S. Charlton, of the Criterion Hotel, Napier, has just written to that city after having accomplished the feat of driving overland to Auckland and back in his own trap and with his provisions, tents, and other appliances necessary for camping.

Mr Clark, secretary of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, has resigned his office, as he finds that he cannot devote his entire time to the work. Mr Clark has always taken a keen interest in the affairs of the Trade, and his resignation will be regretted by the members of the association.

An informal meeting of the Licensed Victuallers' Association was held in Mr Myer's room on Friday afternoon at 4.15. There was not as good an attendance as was expected, as several of the members thought the meeting was to be held at the Coffee Palace.

A number of alterations have been lately made at the Empire Hotel kept by Mr Stewart. The house has been papered and painted throughout, and some very attractive linoleum dados have been used in a number of the rooms. Altogether, the Empire in its new dress is well worth a visit.

The municipal officers of Ballarat are a little more liberal as to the retailing of alcoholic refreshments than our Licensing Committee here is, judging from the recent Exhibition bar struggle. In Ballarat a deputation waited on the Mayor, objecting to the sale of liquor on the cricket field; they were politely shown the door.

A South African paper states that testotal drinks are invented in order that doctors shall grow wealthy through the general dyspepsia of the public. There is more truth than poetry in this assertion, as colic seems to be the natural concomitant of some of our New Zealand temperance drinks.

DR. TARRANT,

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Please Mention SPORTING REVIEW When Writing.

We give below the full verdict of the jury in the inquest on the Royal Oak fire in Wellington:—"We are of opinion that Greer and Blandford met their death by suffocation by smoke which [was caused by the false sense of security produced by the fact that they were some distance away from the scene of the fire in a brick building, and they failed to expedite its exit, and were overtaken by the smoke that rapidly accumulated after they were timely warned of their danger. We are of opinion that an error of judgment was made in not making careful search of the new wing by the fire brigade, but this was partly due to the statements made by persons who had escaped from the building, that all were out safely, and it is regrettable that proper ladder appliances were not brought to the fire at an earlier period. After analysing the evidence we are of opinion an error was made by the brigade in not concentrating their efforts more fully at the new wing at an earlier period of the fire. Had they done this the probabilities are that that portion of the building might have been saved. The jury consider that the fire originated in the kitchen, but there is no clear evidence to show how it occurred. We think that the Licensing Committee, or some responsible body, should take into consideration the whole question of suitable fire escapes and alarms for hotels, public buildings, and boarding-houses, and for this purpose experts should be consulted. We are of opinion that the appliances of the brigade are inadequate; that there was not sufficient permanent men; and that the brigade generally requires reorganisation and reconstruction. We desire to express our condolence with the relatives of the deceased persons, who met their death in the fire, and also with Mr Gilmer, at the loss of his house, which was so well conducted, and we believe that everything was done by him and his staff to save the lives of the inmates."

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