

knew if it passed that at the next poll the people who could afford to get liquor would vote against "no-license," knowing that if they did not they would not be able to purchase it. If liquor could be imported into "no-license" districts in wholesale quantities what would happen? Some man having a large quantity and knowing that there was a desire and demand, would sell, and become a sly grog-seller—a law-breaker manufactured by circumstances. Then came the spy and the informer, who sneaked into houses with the object of inducing people to break the law. The speaker instanced cases which had occurred in Ashburton, and quoted the remarks of a judge on the subject of informers. He added that the informer—the sneak, the contemptible cur—was a result of the "no-license" system. Every time a man drank under sub rosa conditions he went down socially and morally, and the same remark applied to the illicit seller. The speaker held that respect for one law might mean disrespect for all laws, and when people were forced into such a position it meant political and social demoralisation. "Harper's Weekly" had said that one of the results of prohibition was the increase of apothecaries' shops, and instanced a case where in Kansas five hundred gallons of spirits were seized at the drug store of a leading citizen. This proved that the passing of a prohibition law had not prohibited the desire, and the demand, and supply. A Boston paper had said that "no-license" was a "screaming farce," and it was a screaming farce in New Zealand prohibited areas also. The lecturer quoted reports from Dunedin and other papers in support of his assertions. He asked his listeners to read the statistical work of Messrs Rowntree and Sherwell if they wanted to know how "no-license" worked in America—"no-license" was a grand success when it was jammed up close to a place where liquor could be got. Surely we could have found out how prohibition worked without experimenting for ourselves. Like causes produce like effects and the carrying of prohibition could not alter that natural law. Let prohibitionists be honest; if they wanted "no-license" let it be "no-license" pure and simple. He knew that if that principle were acted upon there would not be "no-license," yet the existing state of things was a snare and a deception. Only a few days ago a "no-license" convention was held, and a determination arrived at that at next election an effort should be made to capture every seat for prohibition candidates. The political capacity was not to be considered; all that was to be taken into account was the cause of prohibition. The prohibitionists had been too well considered, and now wanted to rule the country. Was prohibition the only interest at stake in the colony? Was it to be tolerated that the political power in the colony should be captured by this party, whose motives were not, he was beginning to believe, of such an uplifting nature as they would wish people to believe, but were actuated by a desire to gain power. He could, if he so desired, quote authority upon authority to show that what had happened here had its parallel in places where the same iniquitous thing had been imposed on the people. Mr Murray, author of "The Liquor Laws of Kansas," said there were many who never learned by experience, but who might learn that prohibition everywhere was a failure. The only way to bring about temperance was by moral suasion, not through the medium of politics. Voluntary efforts on behalf of temperance was a thing of the past; prohibitionists were now trying to bring about moral reform by the machinery of the law. Majority vote in this connection was only another form of force; nearly all wise legislation was in the direction of conserving the rights and privileges of the individual. The pharisaical man who was prohibitionist by profession invariably held his head as if he were a superior being because, forsooth, his appetite did not run in the same direction as that of his neighbour. What a prig he (the speaker) would be were he to profess to be superior to his father and mother because his tastes were different. Yet his father and mother were moderates and he was partial to water. If a man was "moderate" he could lay claim to all the merit there was in the world. The man who could not control his language in the cause of prohibition was as intemperate as the man who drank more than he should, and was more blameworthy, because he should know better. Many were led away by appeals to sentiment, and while not undervaluing the sentiment he (the speaker) asked his hearers to keep their sentiment subservient to their reasoning powers and to vote accordingly when the time came to say whether the reins of political power were to be intrusted to the prohibitionists, who had in the past made so many specious promises—luscious fruit which deceived the eye and the taste of which had turned into Dead Sea fruit. Let them clear away obscurities, and endeavour to ascertain what the harvest really was to be—a harvest of

strong men and strong women, or submission to conditions which would only suit weak men. For if the standard was weak instead of strong, it would mean a weak race. Several questions were asked and answered, and the following motion carried, with a couple of dissentient voices:—That in the opinion of this meeting no amendment of the licensing laws of the colony will be unsatisfactory unless it includes clause 9 of the Bill introduced last session. Votes of thanks to the speaker and the chair concluded the meeting.

THE WINE INDUSTRY.

A new company, with a capital of £20,000, has just been privately floated in Auckland by Mr W. R. Holmes, for the purpose of effecting the amalgamation of several of the local companies engaged in the making of New Zealand wine. The new company completed the purchase last week of the Gardenhurst property, Remuera, belonging to Mr James Mason, where upwards of five acres of grapes are grown under glass. The balance of the land, after reserving the long road frontage for building purposes, is being trenched, and will be planted this season as an open vineyard. Wine cellars are to be erected, and the working of the new company will be centralised as far as possible at Gardenhurst. The businesses amalgamated under this scheme are: The Vineland Wine Company, Whangarei. Glen Var Winery, Gardenhurst. Vineries, Zealandia Wine Agency, Fort Street, and others. The amalgamated company, in addition to its own large stock of wine, will have the agency of several vineyards, and thus have command of variety as well as quantity.

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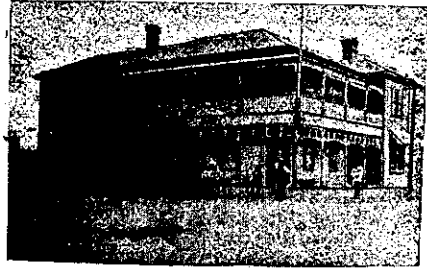
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EXTRACT FROM LEADING ARTICLE OF THE "NORTHERN TIMES," ROGART, SCOTLAND, OF 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1903.

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