THE ENGLISH LICENSED VICTUAL-LERS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT BRIGHTON.

The Grand Hotel, Brighton, was the scene of this year's conference of the l.icensed Victuallers' National Defence Lea-

censed Victualiers' National Defence League the last week in September.

The Mayor of Brighton (Alderman Marx) having cordially welcomed the council of the league on behalf of the townspeople, Alderman Morrall, after tendering his thanks, proceeded to give his inaugural address. When they last much he said they were able to congratumet, he said, they were able to congratu-late themselves that the Government had so far fulfilled their promise of the previous year that they had introduced a bill to amend the licensing laws, and to give licensed victuallers some measure of security for their property. The Act passed last session was, of course, not all they could desire, but, considering the great difficulties the Government had to great difficulties the Government had to surmount, the persistent opposition arising from those who called themselves the temperance party, he thought the Government and the Trade were to be congratulated on the passing of the Act. (Cheers.) When the Bill was first drafted it was a very different measure from that which eventually became law. It made no satisfactory provision for the interests of the retailers, but it did make provision for the owners of licensed premises. The Parliamentary Committee premises. The Parliamentary Committee of the League framed what they deemed to be judicious amendments, and as they got the sympathy of the Government these amendments became in a great measure part of the Act. (Hear, hear.) When a licensee was disturbed in his property full compensation would now paid for the loss of his business as well as for fixtures, which would otherwise have become so much waste material. Measures have also been taken with a view to the protection of tied nouse tenants, even where their tenure was brief. (Hear, hear.) The President proceeded to describe the various changes made in the Act in its passage through Parliament and the nature of its leading provisions. and the nature of its leading provisions. Although the Act gave power to reduce the number of licenses, it would at the same time secure full compensation to disturbed interests. He had always thought that the public should find the funds for the purpose of compensation, but as that was impossible the Trade fell into line with those in nower and ac-

cepted the scheme for Trade contributions to that fund. He hoped that at some future time the schedules would be modified. (Hear, hear.) Other questions that required to be watched were looming in the distance. It was proposed, on the Sunday closing question, to include Monmouthshire in the Welsh area, and if the Trade allowed that to pass without their interference and resistance it would doubtless be proposed to add other counties, and they might find their liberties frittered away piecemeal. This and questions were being watched by the Parliamentary Committee of the League so as to oppose fresh burdens, and to seek alleviations from which the Trade now suffered. (Hear, hear.)

Next the report of the Parliamentary Agent was presented. This detailed the steps taken by the Parliamentary Committee during the passage of the Licensing Bill to bring before the Government such modifications of the original proposals as would meet the claims of the license holder. Suggested amendments license holder. Suggested amendments were supplied, and the replies received from the Home Secretary and several of his colleagues confirmed the committee in its belief that every effort would be made to meet the case of the license holder. Whatever opinions might be held as to the merits or demerits of the Act, or as to its faults of omission or commission, everyone, the report went on to state, must recognise that, so far as license holders were concerned, the great major-ity of them would be directly benefited by its provisions. These provisions—in Sections 2 and 3—empowered license holders, if their tenancy was for a year or less, to deduct from their rent the charges payable by them—should those charges the charges payable by them—should those charges not amount to more than half the amount of the rent—entitled them, as tenants, to a minimum compensation of one year's business, and secured to them full consideration of their claims.

The President moved a resolution expressing "grateful thanks" to the Government "for the measure of equity and passed last session. At the me, "it records its deep regret same time, that, whilst any costs incurred under the Act by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue on an appeal are to be paid out of the compensation fund, no similar provision is made for the payment of the appellant's costs where his appeal is successful; further, the council is of opinion that the system of granting new licenses as embodied in Section 4 of the Act will

seriously restrict individual enterprise and not be beneficial either to the locality or to the State." This was seconded This was seconded by Mr Hardy (Birmingham), and agreed

A series of important resolutions were then agreed to with unanimity. The first of these, moved by Mr J. Gibbins (Monmouth), and seconded by Mr Wood (Bristol), declared that strenuous opposition should be organised against any measure having for its object either the entire closing of licensed houses on Sunday or the curtailment of the present hour of opening on the grounds that such restriction was not needed in the such restriction was not needed in the public interest; that where it existed illicit drinking places had largely inceased in number and their pernicious influence had been extended; that it would seriously interfere with the convenience and comfort of working people, and would be class legislation of the worst kind because it would affect the poor but not the rich; and that it was not in any sense a temperance movement, but an old dea temperance movement, but an old device of those who sought the suppression and not the regulation of the sale of drink. A second resolution was also unanimously adopted dealing with the early closing of public houses on Saturdays. This resolution, which was moved by Mr G. W. Hardy (Birmingham), and seconded by Mr G. L. Warren (Norwich), instructed affiliated associations to resist any attempt to close licensed houses on Saturday nights at an earlier hour than at present, as such a restriction would, in the words of the resolution, "be a gross outrage upon the rights and the libertics of the wage-earning classes, liberties of the wage-earning classes, would considerably increase illicit drinking with its harmful effects, and could serve no good purpose, either socially or morally, while facilities for almost unlimited indulgence in intoxicating liquors are permitted to exist in places unlicensed and not subjected to police supervision."

In the course of the debate on this resolution a communication was read from Glasgow declaring that there was a great deal more drunkenness in that city now than before the early closing arrangement, and the chairman stated his belief that relatively Glasgow "was fifteen times as drunken as London."

The President wait that the base of

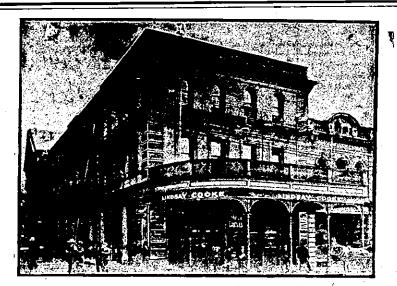
The President said that the Dean of Hereford, in his remarks about drunken men and women rolling in the streets in a terrible condition, had made a mistake in supposing that these people had become intoxicated in public-houses. They

had obtained the drink in clubs. They protested against such allegations. Not only as innkeepers but as citizens of the Empire they all carnestly desired that drunkenness and debauchery should cease. (Hear, hear.) He moved the following resolution:— The provisions in part 3 of the Licensing Act, 1902, for the Regis-tration of Clubs are, in the opinion of this council, utterly inadequate to remedy the evils arising from so-called clubs, which are mere drinking places untaxed and free from Excise control and police supervision. Under these circumstances the council feels that separate legislation is required, and instructs the Parliamentary agent to re-draft the bill submitted by him to the half-yearly meeting at Scarborough, so that this may be considered by the Paliamentary Committee prior to the distribution of copies to affiliated associations for their consideration, and report to the annual conference as to the advisability of its adaption." Mr Taylor (Pontefract), in seconding, said these clubs were doing a great deal of harm. Mr Isaac Tuner (Liverpool) said he was of opinion that all the evils complained of could be dealt with by the police; but the secretary said that the police in many districts appeared to be uncertain as to the powers they had to deal with this matter. Mr Martin (Wakefield) spoke of several licensed houses in that town which had been ruined by these clubs, some of which were supported by the browers. The secretary said he knew the case of a firm of brewers who had given a loan of £4000 to one of these clubs. The resolution was adopted.

Mr Coates (West Hartlepool) moved, and Mr Ingle (Salford) seconded, a resolution of protest against the beer and spirits tax, amounting to more than £3,000,000 per annum, imposed on the Trade in 1900 for the war in South-Africa, and advocating its remission.

The resolution was carried.

The President referred in eulogistic terms to the valuable assistance rendered to the council and the Trade generally by Mr Robinson, the secretary, in connection with the amendments to the Licensing Bill, and proposed a hearty vote of thanks to him for his energetic and useful services. This was seconded by Mr J. S. Brown, supported by the vice-president and others, and carried amid applause. Mr Robinson assured them that this acknowledgment of his services was



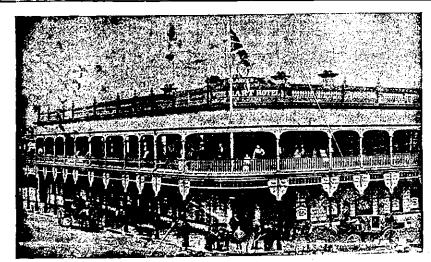
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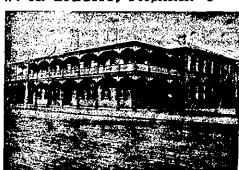
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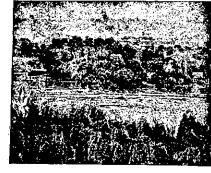
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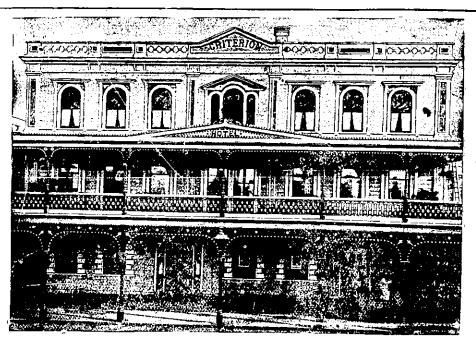


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