

THE ENGLISH LICENSED VICTUALLERS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT BRIGHTON.

The Grand Hotel, Brighton, was the scene of this year's conference of the Licensed Victuallers' 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 met, he said, they were able to congratulate 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.

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.

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 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.

The President moved a resolution expressing "grateful thanks" to the Government "for the measure of equity and justice" passed last session. At the same time, "it records its deep regret 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 by Mr Hardy (Birmingham), and agreed to.

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 public interest; that where it existed illicit drinking places had largely increased 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 device of those who sought the suppression and not the regulation of the sale of drink.

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 earnestly 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 Registration 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 Parliamentary 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 adoption." Mr Taylor (Pontefract), in seconding, said these clubs were doing a great deal of harm.

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.

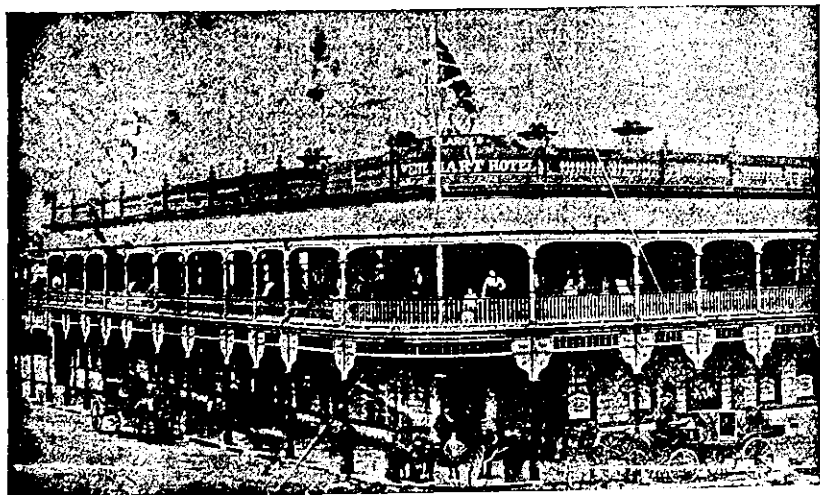
The President referred in eulogistic terms to the valuable assistance rendered to the council and the Trade generally by Mr Robinson, the secretary, in connection with the amendments to the Licensing Bill, and proposed a hearty vote of thanks to him for his energetic and useful services. This was seconded 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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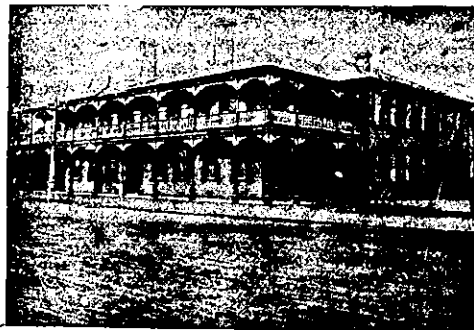
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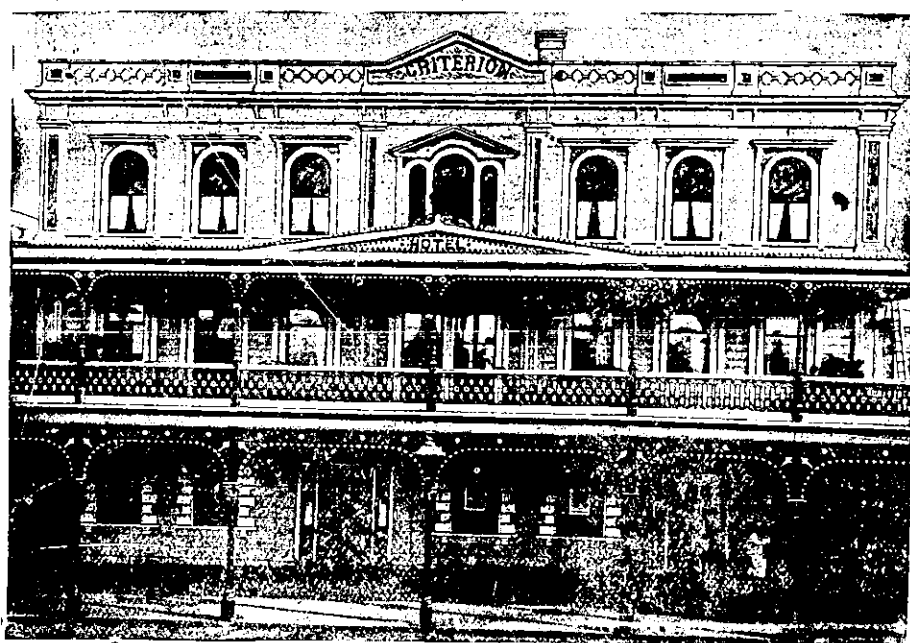


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