

of wine in this district and in Australia, it should be a lucrative undertaking here, for the climate is mild, the average rainfall is distributed more equally during the year and the soil is richer, consequently the crop is larger. No doubt the establishment of this State farm will be of great utility to people who have embarked upon the industry, and those about to go in for it."

A FARCICAL ELECTION.

At the time of the general election and again at the Licensing Committee election we had, unfortunately, every evidence that some persons regard only too lightly the reason of an election. In a country like ours, where everyone or nearly everyone is endowed with a vote, the conclusion is that that voting power is given with a view of everyone being empowered to have a voice or say in the conduct of the country or the city's business. Expectation runs that this voting power shall be freely but sensibly used. Given this much in, what can be said of the election for the Mayoralty of this city which took place last week. Can the voters who voted in the minority claim that they used the power given them in a sensible manner? To what end can it be argued that an election was forced upon the city? Have we to conclude that among us we have a few voters who are so irresponsible that they cannot distinguish the difference between sense and nonsense? Apart from the expense that the city was forced to face in this matter, the principle underlying the turning of an important election into a farce is one that needs considerable attention. Aspirants for office such as Mayor of Auckland should be required to advance something more than the paltry £10. This deposit alone is not evidence that a candidate would make a Mayor. If it is deemed sufficient by a certain section, then there is no reason why at election times nominations for office should not be sought from among the inmates of the Mental Hospital. No doubt many of the unfortunates there possess the necessary tenner.

NO HARM DONE.

At Liverpool Assizes recently the Rev. Alex. Harvey, a Baptist minister, of Widnes, sought damages for slander against Paul Caldwell, a publican. During the municipal election, in which defendant was a candidate, the plaintiff attacked the liquor trade, and said he was a life-long teetotaler. Defendant at his meeting declared plaintiff's statement untrue, as he had personally served him with liquor. Defendant refused to withdraw this allegation. The jury found for defendant, on the ground that plaintiff's character as a minister was not injured.

WHISKY—OR WHAT?

In dealing with the above question and after carefully following the lengthy and varied evidence given in the whisky prosecutions which have recently been heard, the "London Licensed Victuallers' Gazette" says:—We gather from the lengthy and lucid judgment which Mr. Fordham delivered in what is known as the whisky prosecutions that whisky should consist of "spirit distilled in a pot-still derived from malted barley, mixed or not with unmalted barley and wheat or either of them." Furthermore, we learn that the description "Irish" and "Scotch" as applied to whisky denotes, in addition to its place of origin, a particular kind of whisky made in a particular way from particular material in a particular place. The term "Irish whisky" is used, according to Mr. Fordham, to denote whisky "made by Irish methods, from materials used in such methods in Ireland"; and the term "Scotch whisky" to denote "whisky made by Scotch methods from materials used in such methods in Scotland." The material in the case of Irish whisky is defined as a mash consisting of 75 per cent. of barley malt, while in the case of Scotch whisky the material consists wholly of malted barley and the method of distillation to be employed in both cases is that of the pot-still. The peculiar flavour and smell of Irish whisky manufactured in these conditions he attributed to the rye employed, and the distinctive characteristics of Scotch whisky are derived from the system of malting over a peat fire. Mr. Fordham arrived at his conclusions on the subject from the evidence given by analysts and chemists and by the evidence of his own senses. In their flavours as well as their aroma he found so wide a difference between pot-still whisky and a blend of patent-still spirit stiffened with a dash of the genuine article that he considered no average man could mistake the one for the other, and having submitted both to the test of inward application, he discovered the effects of the two beverages upon the system to be different also. In the cases of the two samples of Scotch and Irish whisky respectively upon which the prosecutions were brought by

the Islington Borough Council, he found that they consisted of spirit distilled in a patent still, derived principally from maize, and blended with less than 10 per cent. of pot-still whisky. These fluids, Mr. Fordham declared in his judgment, did not conform to the standard of Scotch or Irish whisky as he defined it; they were not entitled to be so described; they were not what the consumer means when he asks for Scotch or Irish whisky; and their sale under those descriptions was a fraud upon the public. It was in his finding, a dual case of adulteration and misrepresentation, and while he did not think much moral blame attached to the defendants themselves he fined each of them 20s and imposed a further penalty of £100 in the form of costs. According to this judgment, all whisky which is other than pot-still spirit must be clearly labelled to inform the purchaser the nature of the fluid he is buying. Patent-still spirit, or patent-still spirit mixed with whisky is not declared to be injurious, nor is it unlawful to sell either the one or the other, but if this decision stands, notice will have to be given to the purchaser of what it is when such spirit is sold to him, and on being served with it he must not be allowed in his ignorance to believe that what is supplied to him is Scotch or Irish whisky. Seeing that the present output of whisky in Scotland is about 26,000,000 gallons per annum, and of that fully two-thirds is represented by the product of the patent-still, it is not surprising to learn that this decision has caused some sensation in the Trade. But it would be even more surprising if the matter is not carried to a higher Court.

It will immediately occur to the casual observer that the effect of this somewhat

unexpected judgment, though calculated to cause blenders and distillers the maximum of inconvenience, will not affect the public in the remotest degree. If it had the result of guaranteeing the age which is affixed to the whisky, an advantage would have been secured to the public, as it is an incontrovertible fact that some firms are more than generous in the manner in which they date their manufactures. But it is perfectly safe to say that when the average man purchases whisky he consults his tastes and his pocket, he does not care a continental whether it is pot or patent, so long as he has Mr. Fordham's assurance that it is not injurious, and he does not expect to get the cream of the market for half-a-crown a bottle. Nor do we doubt that when—if ever—the two-and-sixpenny spirit is decorated with an analytical label that covers the entire bottle, the average man will still ask for whisky in entire contravention of the managerial injunction. The barmaid or bar-

man who keeps the average man waiting for the whisky he has demanded, what time his ignorance is dispelled by a technical disquisition, will find themselves unpopular, and we firmly believe that if this decision made the consumption of pure pot-still malt spirit obligatory upon the public, whisky drinking would very soon become a habit of the past. The average man does not desire the rye flavour of Mr. Fordham's Irish, nor does his soul love the "reek" of old-fashioned Scotch. He swears by his particular brand of whisky as he adheres to the brand of tobacco that suits him, and so long as the labels do not confuse him, the pious anxiety of the Islington Borough Council and the consternation in distilling circles will pass him by like the sportive breeze.

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