

of the alterations would take a considerable time, structural alterations being necessary in some cases.

The Chairman said that the condition would be endorsed on the licenses which, on this condition, would be issued. This was carried out, the condition being endorsed on a large number of licenses.

A SMART RAID.

Early last week the "New Zealand Herald" reported that some smart work was done by the Auckland police, when four places where sly grog-selling was suspected were raided, and a quantity of liquor, consisting principally of beer and whisky, was found. Only one person escaped from the four houses. For some time past the police have suspected several persons of sly grog-selling, but the difficulty of making investigations has been considerable, and before a search warrant is issued some definite evidence has to be adduced.

On Sunday morning four squads of police, under Sergeants Hendry, Hanson, Carroll and Moore, all in plain clothes, quietly took up positions in the vicinity of a restaurant and tobacconist shop, a fruit shop, a small boarding-house, and a private residence. In two cases, the usual "watchers" were posted at convenient stations, but the police outwitted them by entering at the rear and sides of the premises. In one case the "watcher" was completely surprised, and did not know anything unusual had occurred till he knew that the police had locked the door behind him.

The police did not enter in a body, but sauntered in casually like ordinary customers. Some of the newly-arrived police in Auckland were requisitioned for the service, and not being known the inmates did not know they had been "cornered" until the police had secured all the doors, thus preventing any escape. The surprise was so complete that the usual amusing incidents inseparable from these raids were almost entirely missing.

In one place no less than 20 persons were found on the premises, and in another case a dozen. Their capture was so complete that they at once recognised that escape was impossible, and they quietly submitted.

The most exciting incident during the raid was connected with a house at which the police had arrived a little too early for the "customers," for they had begun packing the liquor, when no less than eight men marched boldly into the room, and demanded their usual drink. Their astonishment, however, can be better imagined when they became aware of the presence of several handy policemen. One man took in the situation at a glance, and seeing an exit unguarded made one bound and succeeded in getting over a 7ft wall without apparent effort, and escaped. The others were so surprised that they stood as if fixed to the ground, and the police quietly took their names.

In one of the houses raided no one was found on the premises, but liquor was discovered.

The police have no doubt that sly grog-selling has been going on in Auckland for some considerable time, and Inspector Cullen and Sub-Inspector Gordon have been giving special attention to the question lately. A considerable amount of drunkenness has been observed by the police on Sundays, and the hotelkeepers have been blamed for the major portion of it by those who were not behind the scenes. Several men were found hopelessly intoxicated in the raided shops.

The names of all those found on the various premises were taken for purposes of evidence, and proceedings will follow.

HOTEL THIEVES.

Early last week the Auckland "Star" reported that somewhere in the wee sma' hours of Sunday morning the rooms of a number of the slumbering boarders at the Waitemata Hotel were stealthily entered by an enterprising individual of light principles, and sundry of the sleepers' pockets were relieved of cash, the haul amounting to about £12. One visitor states that he found himself on Sunday morning minus £10 in gold and notes; another lost about £1 worth of silver; while a third lost half a sovereign, and found his watch chain spread about the room in links, the uninvited guests apparently having been startled while endeavouring to wrench it from the vest. Another boarder missed his cheque book and a quantity of papers, but search re-

vealed them floating in the bath, where they had been disdainfully flung by the seeker after booty. There is at least one of the hotel visitors, however, who is now congratulating himself upon the circumstance of luck, for he slept with his door open and £200 worth of notes in his inside pocket, which on Sunday morning were found untouched.

The opinion of the inmates is that the robbery was committed by someone who slept in the hotel, as the round must have been made between 12 o'clock and morning, several of those visited not having retired before midnight. A man clad in pyjamas was seen about to enter one of the rooms, but apparently thinking himself detected, shut the door again and hurried away. The one who noticed him did not imagine at the time that theft was his object, thinking that it was a boarder who had mistaken his room.

The police were immediately communicated with upon the discovery of the thefts, and Detectives Shine and Hollis proceeded to investigate, but as only money was taken, it is an extremely difficult task to fix the perpetrator.

The theft again emphasises the necessity for reasonable precaution on the part of visitors to large hotels, especially during holiday seasons. The careless practice that many people follow of leaving large sums of money in their clothing at night when visiting hotels, not infrequently leaving their doors open or unlocked at the same time, is simply placing a premium on dishonesty. For when a place has a hundred or more of strangers sleeping under its roof, there is always a possibility that an undesirable may be among them.

FATAL FIRE.

Early last Friday morning McCann's Hotel, at Tapanui, was burned to the ground. It was subsequently discovered that Father McGrath, who was lodging in the house, was burned to death. It appears that the rev. gentleman was in the habit of reading in bed. It is stated that the proprietor, Mr. McCann, is a heavy loser, his insurances being light.

LICENSING COMMITTEES MEETINGS.

MANUKAU.

TWO HOTELS TO BE CLOSED.

The annual meeting of the Manukau Licensing Committee was held last week in the Courthouse, Onehunga. Mr. Dyer, S.M., was in the chair, and there were present:—Messrs. Gordon, Neilson, Rowe, McLaughlin and McLennan. The Chairman stated that as reduction had been carried at last election the Committee had decided to close two hotels, and had chosen five hotels from which they intended, after receiving the police report, to select the two to be closed. The following are the five chosen to be reported on on June 29: Royal Hotel, Onehunga; Victoria Hotel, Onehunga; Railway Hotel, Drury; Wairoa South Hotel, and Miranda accommodation house.

Transfers: Transfers were granted to the following hotels:—Harp of Erin Hotel, Ellerslie, from George Wright (deceased) to Ellen L. Wright; Star Hotel, Otahuhu, from William Abbott to W. Regan; Criterion Hotel, from E. Y. Buller to A. Thomas; Wairoa South Hotel, from F. Sara to W. G. Abbott (adjourned until June 29).

Renewals: Renewals were granted to the following hotels:—Marine Hotel, Howick, E. Bennett; Papakura Hotel, Thomas McEwin; Globe Hotel, Papakura, Walter Guise; Prince Albert Hotel, Onehunga, Geo. Dalziel; Exchange Hotel, Onehunga, E. Keating; Royal Oak Hotel, Onehunga, H. Schmeidel; Manukau Hotel, Onehunga, R. T. Michaels; Railway Terminus, Onehunga, A. Bishop; Star Hotel, Otahuhu, W. Regan; Hibernian Hotel, Onehunga, T. C. Christensen; Criterion Hotel, Otahuhu, A. Thomas; Harp of Erin Hotel, Ellerslie, E. L. Wright.

The Court then adjourned until half-past two p.m. on June 29, when the Committee will receive the police reports on the five hotels mentioned and reduce the number by two.

FRANKLIN.

The annual meeting of the Franklin Licensing Committee was held at Mercer last week. Present: Messrs. Northcroft (Chairman), Ballard, Motion, Boilie, Allen and Routley. Applications for renewal of licenses for the following hotels were heard:—

Kentish Hotel, Waiuku: Police report satisfactory, renewal granted.

Pukekohe Hotel (Mr. Parr, solicitor, representing the licensee): Police report stated that not sufficient bedroom accommodation was provided, but in all other respects the hotel was commodious, and up to date. The Committee decided to grant a renewal, on the understanding that the licensee would build more bedrooms.

Mauku Hotel (Mr. Parr, representing licensee): A petition was received from residents, asking that the Licensing Committee order the erection of a new hotel, as the old one was too far gone in decay. The police report was in favour of the old hotel, and considered that the present building met all requirements. A plan was submitted by the owner, which showed considerable repairs and improvements, and which the Committee considered ample for an out-of-the-way place. Renewal of license was granted.

Raglan Hotel (Mr. Basley representing licensee): No police report being to hand, the Bench decided to adjourn the hearing of this application till next quarterly meeting, and to grant a temporary license in the meanwhile.

Renewals were granted for the Railway Hotel, Mercer, Tuakau Hotel, Rangiri Hotel, Huntly Hotel, Taupiri Hotel, and the Nottingham Castle Hotel, Morrinsville, the police reports being favourable.

BAY OF PLENTY.

At the annual meeting of the Bay of Plenty Licensing Committee, held at Tauranga last week, the licenses for the Central, Rob Roy, and Waihi Hotels were renewed. With regard to the latter, Sergeant McKinnon asked for certain alterations to be effected, and the solicitor (Mr. Sharp), who represented the owners, promised to comply with the sergeant's recommendation. With respect to the Sterling Hotel, Sergeant McKinnon objected to the license being granted on the ground of there being insufficient fire-escapes and some of the rooms being in a very insanitary state. Both the licensee (Mrs. Pilling) and the lessees were represented, and the Committee decided to grant the license until July 5, by which time the Court ordered that Sergeant McKinnon's recommendations must be given effect to.

WELLINGTON.

At the City Licensing meeting last week all applications for renewals were granted (except in the case of the Post Office Hotel, which was held over until next quarterly meeting, as mentioned below).

In the course of the proceedings, the Chairman stated with reference to old houses, that while the Committee was not going to force anyone to rebuild, it would insist that the house should be kept in good repair and order, and that any recommendations made by the police must be carried out.

Inspector Ellison said that meant that the Committee would not order any house to be rebuilt so long as there was a shadow of decency about it.

The Chairman: The Committee is not going to force anybody to rebuild.

The Inspector: Then it is no use to lodge objections against them because they are too small or on account of want of accommodation? There is a technical accommodation required by the Act, but all that is not sufficient for the city.

The Chairman: The Committee will soar above technicalities.

When the applications for renewal of the Post Office Hotel was reached, the Chairman remarked upon the danger of the building in case of fire, and the Committee was of opinion that something would have to be done to increase the means of exit. The Committee would adjourn the application to next quarterly meeting in order to allow that to be done.

In several hotels, where night porters are kept, the Committee stipulated that a bell should be provided on the premises for the use of the porter or anyone else in giving an alarm of fire.

The Committee refused an extension of the closing hour to 11 p.m.

CHRISTCHURCH.

The annual meeting of the new Licensing Committee was held last week. In connection with the renewal of one license the Chairman said the Committee was of opinion that the existence of dives was not in the best interests of the trade. In regard to

another hotel the Chairman said the Committee would not grant a license while the bar opened to a right-or-way, and the application was directed to stand over. Several other applications were adjourned on the grounds that the buildings were unsuitable, or that the houses were conducted improperly. Application was made on behalf of the Licensed Victuallers' Association for an extension of the hour of closing to 11 o'clock, in view of the Exhibition. The Chairman said that the Committee was of opinion that the suggestion of people being shut out during closing hours was only a bogey. It was absurd to say that a man had no right to be in an hotel after the closing hour, for the law specially provided for men being on licensed premises after closing hours, with reasonable excuse, and the matter was adjourned till June 18. The question of brewing firms appointing managers to run hotels came up in connection with an application for the renewal of a certain license, and the Chairman said it was against the whole spirit of the Licensing Act that the manager of a brewing firm should be put into a house as licensee. That was the worst feature of the tied house system, and he believed the bulk of the trade was opposed to the system. The Committee was not going to allow any brewing firms in Christchurch to run houses for their own benefit. After some further discussion the Committee adjourned the matter until Saturday week.

DUNEDIN.

At the annual meeting of the Caversham Licensing Committee, only three applications for renewals were granted, eight others being adjourned for various reasons. In the case of the Racecourse Hotel, the elected members of the Committee intimated that it must be rebuilt. Mr. Solomon, who appeared for the applicant, after some discussion, said if it could be established to the satisfaction of the Committee that the place could not be put into an effective state of repair, then the Committee had the right to say it must be rebuilt. At present he could not admit the right of the Committee to say so. The Chairman said the elected members were of opinion that the repairs were such as would mean the rebuilding of the house.

Mr. Solomon: But you do not say you will not grant a license till the hotel is rebuilt?

The Chairman: No.

Mr. Solomon: Then it is premature for us to do anything.

After further discussion the case

Keep it on hand

WOLF'S SCHNAPPS

A DRINK.
A TONIC.
A MEDICINE