



FEELING THE PINCH.

The news from down South that an indignation meeting was held at Burnside cattleyards to protest against the closing of the Kaikorai Junction Hotel, which is situate near, carries with it a salutary warning to those who view local polls with indifference. The good people down there, now that it is too late, discover that a house of the kind is wanted. The house is closed, now they feel the pinch, as hundreds of others in other parts of the colony are doing. If the same spirit of protest actuated voters before an election, and not after, then we would have no chronicle of closed houses. It is well known that the majority of those who do not trouble to record their votes would be in favour of allowing licenses to stand as they are. The huge vote as recorded by the women of the colony, and the unrecorded male vote, brings about a state of affairs occasionally such as has caused the Burnside people to rise up in indignant protest. The lesson written from this indignation meeting is that every voter must, if he does not wish for undesirable reform, take more interest in local option matters. There is, and always has been, too much of an inclination to leave matters to the brewers and licensed victuallers, and it is only when the sharp lesson is taught to business men, travellers, and residents, that licensed houses are required in certain localities, that we can hope to secure that friendly interest in the Trade which is most desirable. The indifferent ones should remember that it is just their indifference which makes the struggle, and sometimes causes a reverse; and in view of the indignant protest under review, one cannot help but wonder if all the indignant ones voted right at the December poll, or how many of them voted at all. The contention raised at the meeting that, as the people of Mosgiel had voted largely in favour of prohibition, reduction should have taken place there, has a certain element of fair argument about it, but the law does not allow of any dissection of the electorates, otherwise we would have had some different results in house closing, as witnessed in the Auckland province recently. Moreover, any such method would admit of the enemy concentrating their forces upon a particular locality with the object of closing a certain house, or houses, should reduction be carried. A curious feature of the reduction vote is that districts where there are no licensed houses for miles, may vote to have the licenses in another district reduced simply because they are in the same electorate.

ASTOUNDING REVELATIONS.

That sly-grog selling was, and no doubt is still, rampant in Auckland City, has been a painfully apparent fact for some considerable time, but we were hardly prepared to find that it had reached such immense proportions as those which were revealed in the local Police Court one day last week. For a long time the number of Saturday night and Sunday drunks have at once been a source of trouble to the police and a source of dismay to the hotel-keepers. The latter had the feeling that a considerable amount of blame for the state of affairs would be awarded to them, and being conscious that any such blame was wholly unmerited, they naturally have good reason to be pleased that some at least of the source of supply have been unearthed. In the case before the Court it was stated that for some considerable time the illicit trade had been going on, and that big business was done on Saturday nights and on Sunday. On the Sunday that the raid was made no less than 21 men were found on the premises, and in one small sitting-room no less than 15 or 16 men were found, most of

them having imbibed freely, whilst some of them were decidedly under the influence. These men after a time would have found their several ways into the streets, and provided shocking examples of the alleged misdoings of license-holders. The stock-in-trade was considerable, and in itself was startling evidence of what mischief is wrought even by one illicit den. The defence that financial difficulties with the money lenders had forced defendant to embark on the course he had pursued, was as disingenuous a one as well could be conceived. If defendant was in any way aided, abetted, or prompted to carry on this wholesale illegal business, then his friends should have stood at his side, similarly charged as he was. The penalty of £50, the amount of the fine imposed, appears to be ridiculously small when the wholesale manner in which the business appears to have been conducted is taken into consideration. Also, it is as nothing in comparison, say, with a sentence of endorsement of license which is sometimes meted out to hotel-keepers for a comparatively trivial breach of the Act. Perhaps the most astounding feature of the evidence is that the business could be carried on, and assume the huge proportions it had done, right in the heart of the city.

Trade Topics

Mr. R. Cameron, from Wanganui is reported to have bought out Mr. Geo. Hyde's interest in the Panmure Hotel.

Mr. Chas. McMasters is reported to be the new proprietor of Messrs. Cooke and Co.'s wholesale business in Durham-street.

Mr. Edward Quinn, of the Ponsonby Club Hotel, has sold out to Mr. H. A. Lloyd, late of the Epsom Hotel.

Mr. J. H. Spurr, who has been hotelkeeping for many years at Whakatane, intends shortly to sell out his interests there.

In Sydney last week more than a hundred employees of the British and Australasian Tobacco Company went on strike, owing to the management replacing three men, who were feeding machines, with girls. The management states that the operatives' union recently sought to get the Arbitration Court to fix the wages unreasonably high for a class of work which they contend boys and women can perform. A trial of women at the machines was made only to demonstrate that they are able to do the work. The displaced men were transferred to another department at higher wages.

An indignation meeting, held at the Burnside cattleyards, has condemned the action of the Taieri (Otago) Licensing Committee in closing a hotel close to the yards.

Statistics inform us that Paris yearly swallows more than 300,000,000 oysters, and London more than 1,000,000,000.

Judge Kettle has suggested to the police that they should, if possible, ascertain the source of supply of the liquor sold by a recently-convicted sly-grog dealer.

A pleasing function took place last Thursday in the warehouse of Messrs. Langguth and Co., Fort-street, when a presentation was made to Mr. Jas. Browning by his fellow employees on the completion of his 20th year of service with the firm. The presentation, which consisted of a handsomely-fitted travelling valise and a gold watch, was made by Mr. E. Watkin.

A news item from Hamilton states that Mr. Bright has disposed of his interest in the Hamilton Hotel to Messrs. Raynes, lately of the Ponsonby Club, Auckland.

The heavy fines inflicted on persons convicted of sly-grog selling in Sydney has had the effect of closing nearly all the smaller places.

It is intended in the Victorian Liquor Bill to increase the hotel license fees, so that they may be used if necessary for compensation.

In Auckland last quarter £28,015 was collected as duty on spirits.

Travellers' Rest Hotel, at Riwaka, Nelson, was totally destroyed by fire last Thursday.

The beer duty collected last month in Auckland amounted to £1585 11s 10d, as against £1768 1s 1d in June, 1905, a decrease of £183.

It is stated on good authority that now no-license shops in Invercargill, many sly-grog shops are springing up.

A prohibition order was issued locally last week against Ross Taylor.

A firm of Brisbane drapers has been fined £10 for selling a patent medicine containing over 42 per cent. of proof spirit.

Pure gold of 24 carats is worth £4 4s 11½d per ounce troy.

At Oamaru the change from license to no-license was quietly effected. Two hotels closed their doors at 6 o'clock, but the rest remained open till 11. So far only one property has changed hands. In three other cases the houses have been leased to new tenants as boardinghouses, and in the other seven previous licensees carry on as lodging housekeepers for a while. Two hotel bars in Thames-street have been let as shops.

It is to be hoped that the success attending the recent sly-grog raids made by the police in the city, will have the effect of spurring them to greater activity in the unearthing of all of such dens, and also that it will open the eyes of the public to the true state of affairs in regard to Saturday night and Sunday drunkenness.

The duty collected on beer in Wellington last quarter amounted to £3721 3s 6d.

Mr. Tom Seddon, in reply to a question at his first political meeting, said that he agreed with the local option principle, and thought three years often enough to test public opinion.

In the Taumarunui S.M. Court recently Geo. Cowan, bricklayer, of Taumarunui, was convicted and fined £50 and costs for selling liquor at Taumarunui. The accused did not appear. Mrs. Middleton, Raurimu, for introducing liquor, was convicted, and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon. J. R. Logan, for selling beer at Oio over the standard strength was convicted, and fined 20s and costs. For a second offence he was convicted, and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon. A. Hogg, for introducing liquor into Taumarunui, was convicted, and fined 20s and costs. In two other cases the decision was reserved.

An example of the depreciation of property since the late war is furnished by the sale of the Sea Point Hotel, near Capetown. Two years ago it changed hands for £24,000, now it has been sold for £9500.

At Totara Flat last week (says the "West Coast Times"), Messrs. Mark Sprot and Co. offered by auction the Midland Railway Hotel at that place with 15 acres 25 perches of land, the Public Hall cottage, stables, and out-houses. The property was knocked down to Mr. William Young, of Totara Flat, for £1400, and the stock at valuation.

Work has already begun in the erection of workmen's homes by the Government at Eilerslie.

It is stated that the owners of the premises lately known as the Eden Vine Hotel intend converting the building into seven shops.

That popular hotelkeeper, Mr. Lewis Harris, had the good fortune to strike a century in Tatt's recently.

A gazette extraordinary, issued in Wellington last week, prorogues Parliament until the 31st inst.

At Adelaide the Royal Commission on Inebriety has practically concluded its labours. The Commission agreed unanimously in its recommendations for the treatment of chronic inebriates.

Mr. Maurice Foley, who has been for many years in the employ of Messrs. L. D. Nathan, is resigning his position with that firm to enter into business on his own account.

It is rumoured that Mr. Elliot, chief steward in the Union Company, is negotiating for the purchase of Mr. Rothschild's interest in the Star Hotel, Albert-street.

Alterations and improvements to the Sterling Hotel, at Waihi, are being proceeded with.



WOLF'S SCHNAPPS

A DRINK.
A TONIC.
A MEDICINE