



The sly-grog selling evil, which has been referred to recently, is said to be reaching alarming dimensions in Sydney. Judging from police reports, the curtailment of hotel licenses has been immediately followed by dozens of what are styled "perambulating pubs."

In the local Court, a youth named Frederick Thomas Sparkes a recent arrival from Sydney, was recently sentenced to a month's imprisonment for having stolen some jewellery, the property of two employees at the Star Hotel. Accused was employed as pan-ryman at the time the offence was committed.

During the government investigation of the American Tobacco Co. before U.S. Commissioner Shields recently, Thomas R. Yuille, head of the leaf buying department, told how the company fixed the price paid tobacco growers in order to regulate the supply. A committee of four chosen from the board of directors, he said, determines the company's purchasing policy. The buying is started at an average price, the witness added, which is raised if the leaf is coming in too great. According to his testimony, the American Tobacco Company has buyers in every market in the U.S. but does not attempt to control its competitors' buyers in any of them. The chief competitor, Mr Yuille swore, were the Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and the R. J. Reynolds Co.

While it is legally permissible for a shopkeeper to sell non-alcoholic beverages on Sundays, such beverages must not be swallowed by a customer in any part of the shop where the customer can be seen from the street (says the "Lyttelton Times"). This regulation, according to Mr W. H. Hagger, in charge of the Labour Department's Christchurch office, has been made in accordance with the spirit of the legislation which decrees that no person shall follow his ordinary trade or avocation within view of the public on Sundays. Some of the shopkeepers, however, appear to consider it absolutely necessary that the customer shall remain seated while drinking. Needless to say, there is no legal authority for this opinion.

Some excitement was caused in Market street, Sydney, the other day by the bursting of a cask of wine in a cellar underneath a barber's shop. The barber and his assistants were attending to several customers at the time, while other customers were awaiting their turn. When the explosion took place there was a general rush for the street. The presence in the street of several men with partially lathered faces and towels around their necks, quickly attracted a crowd, but the amusement did not last long. As soon as the cause of the explosion was ascertained the hairdressers and customers returned to the shop. A boy was in charge of the wine cellar at the time, and, as the cask gave warning before it burst, he got out of the way, and the only loss sustained was the wine, which flowed over the floor.

During the 24 years Mr James Ashcroft has been official assignee at Wellington, the estates of 3000 bankrupts have passed through his hands.

A party in a noisy motor car arrived at Rotorua past midnight on Thursday, and began touring round in search of accommodation. At last, with the aid of the constable on the beat, a bed was found—one only. This did not suit one of the party, who held that he could claim a bed as a right, and a long legal argument ensued, and a reference to the sergeant, who was knocked up at two a.m. to discuss the licensing law in his pyjamas.

An enterprising youth of S'ewar Island has lately occupied his time in collecting "dead marines" in the vicinity of Half Moon Bay, and on Wednesday last (says the "Southland Times") he

came over to the mainland with 20 cases of empty bottles, the proceeds from the sale of which he expected would see him comfortably through the holidays.

Mr J. S. Whainsbury, whose death took place at Whangamata recently, under somewhat painful circumstances, had been a licensee in that district for many years, and was well known in the Waihi and East Coast districts. Of late years deceased had not enjoyed the best of health, which was accelerated by business worries. Indication pointed to suicide by poisoning, the jury returning a verdict to that effect, adding that deceased, at the time of his death was of unsound mind.

In the local Court on Saturday, a young man answering to the name of Malcolm Turner, while in a semi-intoxicated state, went into a hotel for a drink. A dispute over the payment resulted in the barman taking the drink back, while Turner picked up a Mr Brookfield and glass and marched off. The defendant had no recollection of the occurrence. His Worship agreed that it was more the act of a drunken man than a case of theft, and discharged the accused with a caution.

A man named John Pearce Baker, appeared in the local Court last week to answer charges of having obtained three sums amounting to £15, from Mr Maurice O'Connor, by means of false pretences. He was remanded on bail.

The procuring of liquor for a prohibited person cost a Paeroa man £1 and costs in the Magistrate's Court at that place last week.

Last Friday, at the Magistrate's Court, Ashburton, Andrew Young was charged with keeping five cases of whisky for sale. He was convicted and fined £20 and costs.

The United States Government has reduced the duty on French wines to 20 per cent. in return for similar concessions on cotton-seed oil and certain classes of machinery.

At Oamaru last week a man named Alfred Millar was fined £5 for having procured liquor during the currency of a prohibition order.

The hop crop in Nelson has, it is reported, been materially reduced since last year, and the general opinion is that the district would have been more prosperous if the picking of hops had never taken place. One grower recently sold 30 bales of last season's crop at 3d per lb, and estimates his loss at £120.

It is reported that the Cook Islanders have taken to drinking perfumery, and regulations are now gazetted stipulating the conditions under which perfumery may be imported and purchased, and the quantities that may be sold; also the fines for breaches of the order.

Mr and Mrs Burns, who are leaving the Panmure district, after being in the Star and Garter Hotel for some years, were farewelled last Friday evening by a large number of residents. Mr Burns was presented with a handsome illuminated address and a gold Albert, and Mrs Burns with a bangle set with pearls.

Business is reported as being excellent so far this season at Rotorua, and with the carnival coming on, no doubt a record season will be recorded. Many people who have not booked rooms find a great difficulty in securing accommodation, every hotel and boarding-house having their capacities taxed to the utmost.

Mr Moss Davis, of Messrs Hancock and Co., Ltd., was booked to leave London on his return journey to Auckland on the 12th December last.

Mr T. Meehan, licensee of Gleeson's Hotel, died last Saturday; aged 55 years.

Mr C. C. Kettle, S.M., has decided that original statements of witnesses and others, if taken down by constables in writing, should be carefully preserved and produced as evidence.

A Fred Crossley who appeared in the local Court last Monday to answer charges of having obtained from W. M. Cooke and C. Leek, sums of money by means of valueless cheques, was remanded for a week.

It is reported from Sydney that while serious crime shows a decrease, drunkenness is on the increase in that city. This is no doubt due to the enormous amount of sly-grog selling which is now said to be carried on there.

A cash box containing coin, cheques, and jewelry to the value of £400, was stolen from the bar of the Old England Hotel, Bourke Street, Melbourne, after closing time one night recently. The empty box was found next morning in a right-of-way.

A Horopito correspondent writes to the Ta'hape "Times":—"We have now ten hop-bee shops all doing a roaring trade. The last two opened about a fortnight ago. A few make it rather strong, which have affected the heads of many."

Champagne has 12.2 per cent of alcohol, and gooseberry wine 11.8 per cent.

The vine attains a great age, continuing fruitful for at least four hundred years. It is supposed to be equal to the oak as regards longevity.

#### THE LATE MR MEEHAN.

By the death of Mr Tom Meehan, which took place last Saturday morning, one of the oldest identities in the Auckland hotel trade, has been removed. For upwards of twenty years Mr Meehan held an hotel license with an unapproachable record. Of a kindly unassuming nature the deceased gentleman made friends with everybody, and of him it may be truly written that his friends were legion and his enemies few. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs Meehan, in her sad bereavement. The funeral last Monday was attended by a large number of friends and acquaintances, testifying to the unbounded popularity of the deceased.

#### THE ANGELO ESTATE.

A special meeting of creditors in the bankrupt estate of John Angelo, fish dealer, of Whangarei, was held at the office of the official assignee (Mr E. Gerard) last Friday. The meeting was called forth the purpose of examining Mr John Mowbray, in respect to the sale of the Ngunguru Hotel. Mr W. G. Beckett appeared on behalf of the bankrupt, and also as proxy for a number of Whangarei creditors. Mr John Mowbray was represented by Mr Howarth (Messrs Earl and Kent).

Mr Howarth moved for an adjournment of the meeting, say, for three weeks, and, on the assignee asking to be given reasons, he said that he was instructed to ask for the adjournment on the grounds that there was a prospect of a settlement between the creditors and Mr W. W. Bruce, who acted as trustee for Angelo's estate under a deed of assignment prior to the bankruptcy.

Mr Beckett, in seconding the motion for adjournment, stated that probably no further meeting would have to be called, as those who were at present creditors, might have been settled with in the meantime.

The assignee said that he considered this an unusual and not quite correct procedure, and as so much publicity had already been given to the matter he would certainly not help to throw a veil over it now, nor would he allow his office to be used for that purpose. It was quite immaterial to him what settlement the creditors and Mr Bruce would arrive at, but whatever such settlement might be, it should be known to him (the assignee),

and should be made in due course through his office. Of course, he said, any proved creditors might ask permission to withdraw their proofs, but the Act provided that they could not do so without the assignee's permission. Satisfactory reasons must, therefore, be given for any request to withdraw.

Mr Beckett agreed, on behalf of the creditors, that no attempt would be made to arrive at a settlement without the approval of the assignee.

The meeting was then adjourned for a month, or as soon thereafter as it may be convenient for the assignee to arrange.

#### SLY GROG CASES.

In the local Court last Friday, charges were preferred against Bert Duncan, of having, on three occasions, in December 21, and 22 last, sold liquor to Constable Clark, without a license. Mr W. E. Hackett defended.

The case for the prosecution, as stated by Sub-Inspector Gordon, was that at about 11 o'clock on the night of December 21 Constable Clark, together with a man named Gilman, proceeded to a house in Customs-street West. They knocked for admittance, and a voice inquired from within "Who's there?" The constable and Gilman replied that they were some of the "boys," who had come to get a "taste." The accused thereupon let them in, and in response to their request supplied them with a bottle of beer, which they paid for. When the contents of the bottle had been despatched, Clark requested to be supplied with another bottle, but accused said he hadn't any more, as seven of his customers had been there already. He said he was quite willing, however, as they requested it, to supply them with liquor next day, and it was then arranged that they should meet behind a stable in Victoria-street. They met again at the appointed time, and accused produced more liquor, which was paid for. Further liquor was supplied the same evening, and was also paid for.

Constable Clark, in reply to Mr Hackett, admitted that after the liquor was supplied on the first occasion, he represented that he had come down from the King Country, and was "dying for a drink."

Mr Hackett: Which, of course, was a lie?

Witness: Yes. Gilman having received any payment from the police for his services, or that he had been promised any.

The further hearing of the case was adjourned until Thursday next in order to enable the defendant to procure evidence.

A charge of selling liquor without a license on December 28 was also preferred against a man named John Sheehan, who pleaded not guilty. Gilman, the witness in the previous case, stated that on proceeding to a house in Federal-street, in company with Constable Clark, shortly after 10 p.m. on the 28th, they saw accused and requested to be supplied with a bottle of whiskey. This was duly brought in, and was paid for. The further hearing of this case was also adjourned until to-day.

#### A VERY IMPORTANT POINT.

Attention was drawn by Mr C. C. Kettle, S.M., during the hearing of an assault case at the Police Court on Saturday, to the taking of statements by constables. It was, he said, most desirable, in the interests of justice, that the original statements of witnesses and others, if taken down by constables in writing, should be carefully preserved, as it was often necessary to have them produced in Court. It was also desirable that such statements, if in writing, should be carefully read over to, and signed by the person making the same, when practicable. Later in the hearing there was a little passage at arms between the magistrate and Sergeant Hendry, who was conducting the case for the prosecution, over the production of one of these statements. A lady, while giving evidence, stated that