

# THE LICENSED VINTNERS' GAZETTE

## THE SITUATION IN ENGLAND.

For some little time past, the opponents of the liquor trade in Great Britain, have been actively engaged in attempts to have in reduced in England measures of law somewhat similar to those existing in the Australian Commonwealth and in our Dominion, as provided by the local option polls. Needless to say, all such attempts have met with strenuous opposition on the part of those engaged in the liquor and brewery trades—trades in the Old Country which represent many millions of money. However, cable news last week reveals the fact that the situation has become more defined though it be more acute. The trade have now, after a lengthy period of suspense, a clear idea of the intentions of the Government. The new Bill introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Asquith) has been based to some extent on the minority report of Lord Peel's commission. Liberal newspapers welcome the measure as bold and far-reaching in its effects; while on the other hand the Conservative organs predict great disturbances and annoyance, and little good towards the promotion of temperance. Perhaps the most advanced suggestion in the new Bill is the one of State control, Mr Asquith explaining that the State gradually and with a disregard to existing interests, would be empowered to recover dominion over the trade. This in itself, is a stupendous undertaking, and one which, in the absence of detailed plans, may be looked upon as practically impossible. Fourteen years has been fixed as a time limit for the compulsory reduction of the number of licenses. After 14 years the monopoly value of all licenses is to be restored to the community, and local option will follow. Meanwhile parochial electors are to exercise the right of a local vote in connection with new licenses, the rate being binding for three years. A feature much to be commended, is that clubs have not escaped attention, these must register annually in order to afford opportunity for objection, and police officials not in uniform may inspect them. Here, at any rate, we find a clause which the trade will welcome gladly. For many years the increasing number of clubs in the large cities has been a matter of serious concern to those engaged in the legalised trade. The clubs of the lower class run chiefly by aliens in London are held to foster more gambling and drinking, than all the public houses put together, the evils resulting from their wrong doings being nearly always laid at the doors of the licensed houses. Local option is to be conferred on Wales, and the bona-fide traveller, now a non-existent quantity in our Dominion, and who now liquors in the old country outside a three mile limit, is to be put back another three miles, making his thirst producing journey a total of six miles. The method and terms of compensation offered in regard to licenses made extinct, do not meet with Mr Balfour's approval, who strenuously protested against the extinction of legal property as robbery. The compensation offered, he said, was not the present market value. That was a fair sum, and anything else was wrong. He predicted the multiplication of unlicensed drinking places. In this, no doubt Mr Balfour has been guided by the evidence from all parts of the world. Insufficient as the compensation clauses may be, yet our brothers in the trade in England, have some thing to be thankful for, in the fact that they are living in a country where the statesmen recognise that compensation is fair and equitable. There are some countries which do not recognise this law of fairness, and allow a three-fifths majority vote to reduce the valuable to the valueless without a shadow of recompense. The "Financial News" has probably hit the right nail on the head when it stated that the impression was gaining ground that the Bill was introduced for the purpose of filling the cup for the House of Lords and to convince teetotalers that it was hopeless to think of inducing the country to agree to views in the direction of spoliation.

Cabled news from London states that the Government has appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the hop industry.

At Dunedin last Thursday the manager of a billiard-room at St. Kilda was fined £2 and costs for permitting cards to be played on the premises. Three others, who took part in the game, were each fined 10s.

At the Waihi Police Court last Thursday, a young man named William Farr, who was arrested in Auckland, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment on a charge of obtaining board and lodging at Waihi by false pretences. Accused had left Waihi in a hurry, the Bench deciding that he had made an attempt to avoid paying his just liabilities.

It is reported that Mr W. White, of Papakura, has sold his interest in his hotel to Mr C. Hill, who recently sold out at Kikikihi.

Rumour says that Mr Jack Bray, who is well known in local hotel keeping circles but has not been in the hotel business lately, intends to shortly re-enter the ranks of the trade.

In the Wellington Court last week, a man named Charles Mack was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for the theft of jewellery valued at £6, belonging to Gertrude Sunkel, a housemaid at the Manukau Hotel, Onehunga. Mack refused to make any statement. His sentence begins at the expiration of a sentence of two years which he is at present serving.

Several men have been before the Southern Courts recently on charges of cargo broaching, Mr Justice Dennis, in Christchurch last week, sentencing four men to six months' imprisonment each. In sentencing the prisoners. His Honour remarked on the easy and tolerant manner pillaging from ship's cargoes was looked upon, and said that it may be doubted whether any large steamer reaches a port in New Zealand without some instances of pillaging, often on a large scale.

"Have you ever seen anyone get tipsy on this," asked a thirsty individual as he eyed a tankard of poor cider at a country inn.

"No, sir," replied Boniface, "I can't say as I hev, but I once had a man bust hisself a-trying to."

A further evidence of the increase in the consumption of methylated spirits as a beverage was afforded in the Central Police Court, Sydney, the other day, when it was stated that a woman who was charged with drunkenness had been arrested in the Domain as she was serving out methylated spirits to two men.

Crops of tobacco that had lain for years in sheds in the Tumut district, New South Wales, and for which the best offers were 2d to 3d per lb to the growers, have just been bought by a Sydney house at 5d to 7d per lb.

At Dunedin last week a serious outbreak of fire occurred in Thomson and Co.'s aerated water manufactory in Crawford-street. The fire was discovered almost in the middle of the 'top storey, where a large quantity of corks, disused machinery, packing, etc., are stored. The flames had a strong hold when discovered and spread with almost incredible rapidity, and when the brigade arrived a few minutes later, the whole floor was ablaze. It is estimated that the damage exceeds £2000.

The insurances are distributed in the Atlas, Standard, Liverpool, London, and Globe, New Zealand, South British, Victoria, National, Commercial Union, Alliance, Royal Australian Alliance, and Phoenix Companies, and total £3250. The fire is supposed to have been caused by a defective chimney.

During last year no less than 65 hotels were deprived of their licenses by the Victorian Licenses Reduction Board, and compensation awarded. Of these 28 were in the metropolitan district, and 37 in country districts.

It is contemplated that a new hotel will be erected shortly to replace the one recently burned down at Waiorongomai.

Owing to the drought the hop crop in Nelson promises to be unusually light this season. In one garden of 12 acres in the Waimeas, just picked, only about 12 bales were gathered. Last year three acres of the same variety yielded 20 bales.

A sovereign weighs, roughly, half as much again as a shilling.

Beer drinkers paid £12,364,075 of last year's revenue; spirit drinkers just under £17,000,000.

Apropos the giving of tips by London tradesmen to servants of customers, "Truth" prints the following:—A friend of mine, who is of a waggish turn, received a visit from his butcher just before Christmas. The butcher asked if there was any objection to the cook receiving her usual Christmas-box. "What is the usual Christmas-box?" asked my friend. The butcher evaded an answer, but on pressure thought that it would not be more than half-a-sovereign. "Well, look here," said my friend, "if it is worth your while to pay my cook half-a-sovereign for the chance of keeping my custom it must be well worth your while to pay me a sovereign for the certainty of it. So you send me up thirty shillings, and I will give the cook ten." He has not yet received a remittance.

At Napier last Friday Harry Wilton, aged 38, plasterer employed at the Caledonian Hotel, died as the result of injuries sustained by falling from a scaffold. He was a single man, and so far as is known, had no relatives in the colony.

The beer duty collected in Auckland last month showed an increase of £515 13s 10d, over the month of February of last year, the figures being respectively £2456 11s and £1940 17s 2d.

A meeting of Kentish hop-growers resolved that the time was ripe for the Government to take action to protect English growers against unfair foreign competition. Some of the speakers suggested a duty of 40s a cwt.

The evil of intimidation is apparently one which the prohibitionist is ever ready to avail himself of. In dailies last week it was announced that "the Rev. F. W. Isitt states that when speaking in Opoiki on the licensing question, on the 21st inst., he was informed that Signor Bragato, Government viticulturist, had addressed a public meeting on the preceding evening in the same hall, and had devoted 25 out of 30 minutes of his address to an attack on the prohibition movement. Mr Isitt points out that without wishing to interfere with Mr Bragato's work, the leaders of the no-license party will, of course, be compelled to draw the attention of the Government to the line of action adopted by one of their officials." Possibly the worthy Signor will be very scared by the reverend gentleman's attentions, but we do not think so. As an expert in viticulture, he no doubt is a firm believer in the command "take a little wine for thy stomach's sake."

The "Daily Telegraph" declares that Mr Asquith's Bill has signed the death warrant of the Government.

Fierce criticisms by representatives of the licensing trade in London declare that the new Bill is sheer robbery.

Last Monday, the police raided a boarding house at Utiku, alleged to be a sly-grog shop, and discovered a quantity of whisky and beer.

Something of a record in license holding is recorded by Mr T. Pearse, landlord at the Shoulder of Mutton Inn, Burn, Yorkshire, who recently celebrated his 93rd year. He has held the license of the inn for 68 years.

The new Licensing Bill introduced in the House of Commons last week, had the effect of causing a considerable slump in the value of brewery shares in London. The "Financial Times" estimated an aggregate shrinkage of thirty-two million sterling.

The brewers and publicans in London are raising £100,000 to conduct a great campaign against the Licensing Bill.

At Rotorua the new baths are rapidly approaching completion, and a hive of workmen are at present arranging the internal furnishings, which will be on a most imposing scale—in fact, unsurpassed in the whole of Australasia.

Mr G. Laurensen, M.P., who addressed a meeting at Lyttelton last Friday evening, said that the women of New Zealand were "taking to drink." He said he had seen eight women seated drinking in a small waitingroom in an hotel in Christchurch. One of the women had a child of about nine months in her arms. He was told by men who frequently visited the hotel that half-an-hour later the room would probably have contained nearly 30 women. Mr Laurensen's statement has aroused great indignation in the Cathedral City, and the correctness of the allegations is being freely challenged.

## MORE PRESUMPTION.

Elsewhere we publish a copy of a no-license petition which is to be put before Parliament by the No-License League at Oroua. We will confess off-hand that we do not know much about Oroua, but from what we can learn, Oroua is a county containing some six thousand odd people, and covering about 213 square miles. Presuming we are on the right place, we should judge from the usual limited views held by no-licensors that it is about the size place that should frame suggested laws for the whole of the Dominion. Briefly, Oroua did not carry prohibition at the local option poll, from the fact that the no-licensors did not poll strong enough. Therefore, they now decide that a bare majority is the correct thing and a petition to that effect is accordingly prepared. The arguments brought forth why this should be, are all too stale to be worth handling. Our legislators in the past decided that property and vested interests in hotel and kindred trades, were too valuable to be gambled away by the turn of a vote. The three fifths majority contains all the elements of fairness, when it is remembered that the gamble is all to nothing.

## NO-LICENSE PETITION.

The following are the terms of a petition to Parliament which was agreed upon at the convention under the auspices of the Oroua No-license League:—

The petition of the undersigned electors in the electoral district of Oroua, in the Dominion of New Zealand, sheweth:—

1. That in the electoral district of Oroua,

