

room has an extremely bright and inviting appearance, and the attendance is all that could be desired, the waitresses indeed being extremely efficient and obliging. On the same floor are the smoking and commercial room, lounge, etc. There are ample and well fitted up lavatories and bath rooms, while the majority of the bedrooms are roomy and well lighted. Mr Paterson, the proprietor, personally supervises the running of the establishment and makes an extremely capable and obliging host.

A license for a new hotel has been granted by the Westland Licensing Committee, which means that Hokitika, with a population of 2240, has 18 licensed houses.

The plans for the Auckland Post Office have been amended by providing for one storey more than was originally intended.

The beer duty collected in Auckland last month shows an increase over the figures for June 1907, the amount that year being £1806 7s 7d. Last month's had risen to £2117 6s 10d, an increase of £310 19s 3d.

Conferences have often been held for rather strange objects, but probably the most extraordinary gathering of the kind which has ever been suggested is a congress to oppose the teetotal movement. It is being organised by the Brewers' Institute of Berlin, and doubtless the trade in this country will be quite ready to send a large delegation to it. Its object, it is stated, is to protest against the exaggerations and encroachments of the teetotal movement, and it may therefore be assumed that all who take part in it will preach the virtues of moderate drinking. Whether there has been any decline in the consumption of beer in Germany is not stated, but in any case it is hardly necessary for a conference to assemble for the purpose of promoting the knowledge and value of moderate drinking. That is a cause which may fairly be left to defend itself.

Teetotalers will not derive much comfort from reading of the consumption of beer at the May brewing in Munich's Royal Court brewery. Between the hours of seven in the morning and five in the afternoon in one day no less than 30,800 gallons of "bock" beer (a very light beverage) were drunk, besides 12,700 gallons of ordinary beer. Fortunately, perhaps, the guests ate as well as drank, and managed to account for 370,000 sausages, 4000 pounds of meat, chiefly beef, and a million "Bretzeln," a kind of salted cracknel ring, of which the Germans are very fond. Of radishes, a very favourite accompaniment to beer and sausages, so many were eaten that they could not be counted.

#### THE ENGLISH HOP-PICKERS.

In May last a remarkable demonstration of hop-pickers took place in London. Some 40,000 of these workers, whose livelihood has been destroyed by England's fiscal tolerance of foreign competition, assembled in the metropolis to protest against a policy which dooms them to starvation. They demand the impost of a duty of 40s per cwt. on all imported foreign hops, but there is little or no likelihood of the British Government, as at present constituted, consenting to abandon its attitude of impotent pedantry, and so stretch out its hands to save an ancient and picturesque industry from extinction. Commenting on the demonstration, the London "Daily Telegraph" says:— "The mechanical methods of the free-importing mind, substituting assumption for investigation as it does, cannot help us to explain the ruinous fall of prices or the condition of the hop industry. The truth is that foreign dumping has been the chief cause of the prevailing distress. In this, as in other ways, the United States and Germany are able to avail themselves of the invaluable privilege of the double market. This privilege is one of the most valuable assets in modern business. Every foreigner in the world possesses it. No Briton has it—unless, indeed, he builds factories or buys land abroad and attacks the market of his own country from behind his adopted entrenchments. Other nations are guided by ideals quite different from ours. In France the vast majority of the population is still rooted to the soil. In Germany there are still about 25,000,000 persons upon the

open land, and the paramount object of Teutonic policy is to keep them there. It is no mean nor unwise purpose. Behind the bizarre facade of American industrialism lies the strong, steady, quiet farming population, which forms the true basis of the health and the wealth, the political strength and the fighting power of the United States. In all these cases the nations concerned believe in keeping intact at any cost the agricultural cost of society. The foreign farmer and his labourers cannot be injured by the strategical operations of foreign capital. Behind the firm rampart of a national tariff, that destructive competition cannot overpass, they till and thrive in peace. They have security. It is what no worker in this country possesses. But foreign hops can be dumped here to an unlimited extent, driving down home prices, and destroying one of the most ancient and picturesque of all British industries. There are said to be still nearly half a million people dependent upon it. Mr Asquith may rely upon it that old age pensions at 70 for the survivors of the social struggle will never reconcile a perishing class of workers to starvation now!"

#### A NEW LICENSE GRANTED.

At the adjourned meeting of the Westland Licensing Committee last week, an application for a new hotel called the Dominion was granted on the casting vote of the chairman. According to applicant's counsel, the hotel is up-to-date in every respect. The application was adjourned from the annual meeting for the presence of an absent member, and on that occasion the Magistrate refused to adjudicate owing to certain allegations appearing in local newspapers, charging him with being an interested party. In delivering the judgment the Magistrate reviewed the position at length, and stated that having traced the source of the allegations against him he could afford to ignore them, and now record his vote, and thus give effect to the wishes of the large majority of electors who at the last local option poll voted for continuance of the existing number of licenses.

Granting the application means that Hokitika, with a population of 2240, now has eighteen licensed houses.

It is probable some objectors will apply to the Supreme Court to quash the decision.

#### HOP-GROWERS GO TO NEW ZEALAND.

Mr John James Bates, one of the best-known hop-growers in Kent, told a Press representative in April last why he is emigrating to New Zealand after trying for 33 years to make hop-growing pay.

"Like many other experienced growers," he said, "I have been living on hopes for a good many years. I cannot live on hopes any longer, so I am going to try sheep farming in New Zealand.

"If I give a good report of that, I know at least seven other families at Kent who will follow me there. You can depend on it that if we do well, the eight families will be followed by a great many more."

Mr Bates is a typical Kent farmer, of stalwart build, and, considering his long experience, he is still comparatively a young man. He was the first to grow in the Cranbrook district, the best part of the Weald of Kent.

"My farm included twenty acres of hops. Fruit and some pasture lands are the only things that have paid. Hops, the most important of all, have proved an absolute failure, owing entirely to the unrestricted imports of the foreign article.

"During the last twenty-five years I have only had three profitable crops of hops, and you cannot live on a paying year once in every eight.

"You cannot properly grow and pick hops under £45 to £50 an acre. We aim here at a crop of a ton to the acre, and generally get less. Supposing we get a ton, and have to sell at 40s per hundred-weight, that gives us £40 an acre.

"Such a crop would cost quite £50 an acre. Therefore with such an excellent crop we lose £10 an acre, and that is why I am thoroughly tired of it.

"I am taking my family to New Zealand to start work afresh. A local auctioneer has just realised my plant, and I leave England in a few months. I had to sell 14,000 hop poles at 2s a hundred. They cost

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me £1 a hundred, and are worth 10s to 12s secondhand. My plant is worth at least £300, and it realised about £100. That shows how anxious growers are to buy plant."

#### THE DRINK QUESTION.

There is a very startling article in the "Westminster Review" for May by Mr T. Good, who writes on the experience of Glasgow and Sheffield.

In Glasgow Sunday closing is severely enforced, and the public-houses are closed at nine or 10 o'clock at night, and on some of the popular holidays they are closed all day. No music, singing, reciting, or games of any kind or description are permitted in Glasgow's public-houses. And there are no barmaids! You are not allowed even to look at a sporting paper, and if you laugh you are turned out! In Sheffield public-houses are open for six hours on Sun-