



A TRADE CHALLENGE.

ADDRESSED TO THE TEMPERANCE PARTY.

A GRAVE SITUATION.

What an Australian Trade journal terms a grave situation has been created in New South Wales by the clear cut challenge issued by Mr. J. B. Sutton, President of the United Licensed Victuallers' Association, to the temperance party to go before the people on the single issue, "Whether there should be prohibition pure and simple or the continuation of the license." The challenge, the Australian Brewers' Journal states, will undoubtedly be accepted, and, therefore, it urges that the Trade should state the true case of the matter in a calm and dispassionate manner. Nearly every member of the trade is as much a moral advocate as the most rabid fanatic in the pulpit, and has far more common sense. The great public has most timely thrown off the clutch of superstition; but tradition still lives, and it is hard to make people repudiate the sophistries by which they were enchained, and of which they were too often enamoured.

ITS SIMPLICITY COMMENDABLE.

Mr. Sutton, our contemporary says, is to be congratulated on the simplicity of his challenge, because it brings the matter to a point without any of the intentions so skillfully introduced by the Temperance party in the examination of a question of the very first importance. On the merits we should say there would be little doubt in the minds of men who have not imbibed the pernicious doctrines of fanaticism; but there is something of far greater importance to be considered than the mere drinking of a glass of honest beer, which our fathers have drunk during all the centuries and which accompanied them while they made the Anglo-Saxon name the glory of the earth.

ANGLO-SAXONS AND LIBERTY.

We Anglo-Saxons have made our name synonymous with personal liberty. If we look at the records of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, we find that the man has in every instance been subservient to the State, and in many cases the conditions remain the same after the lapse of centuries of discontent. In Great Britain and Ireland attempts have been made to introduce similar conditions, but every attempt has invariably failed, although for the most part they were based on most plausible pretences. One of the most potent of these pretences was religion, or rather, what is called religion. All the old enticements of a future Heaven, and all the old horrors of a coming Hell, were tried to bring men into submission; but the good, honest Anglo-Saxon sense ultimately burst all the fetters which men tried to throw round their neighbours' limbs. Catholicism tried it and failed; Protestantism tried it and failed—just as ignominiously. At this moment another artful trial is being made, and it also is certain to fail—ignominiously as all its predecessors have done.

THE TRUE ISSUE AT STAKE.

There is (our contemporary asserts) a great deal of misunderstanding about this matter. No brewer nor licensed victualler is an apologist for drunkenness, which all brewers and publicans detest, perhaps more cordially than the most rabid teetotalers. The brewer and publican recognise that in the slow process of evolution drunkenness in a short time will be unknown—a dead thing of the past—but they know also the moderate use of alcohol is beneficent and beneficial,

and that with it the Anglo-Saxon race has grown to what it is. It is a magnificent record that race has, and beer had a good deal to do with building that record up. The main question, therefore, is whether or not we should interfere with the orderly processes of evolution, and at the same time allow the State, at the dictation of fanaticism to exercise a tyranny indirectly, which has directly been one of the worst scourges of humanity. Whether any man should drink a glass of beer, especially on a Sunday, is after all, a matter of indifference; but it is really of importance whether his own wishes should be respected or not, so long as he does not interfere with the wishes of his neighbours. No man has any right to interfere with, or even criticise, another man's way of living the life imposed on him by a fate with which he has no option.

PENALISING THE TRADE.

MR LLOYD GEORGE'S NEW BUDGET

The Liberal Government at Home hits the brewers and publicans severely with its new Budget proposals. Faced with a deficit of sixteen millions or thereabouts, Mr. Lloyd-George proposes to place an additional duty of 3s. 9d. per gallon on spirits, which he estimates will bring in £1,600,000; to increase the beer tax, and to revise the liquor licenses by raising a uniform percentage on the capital value, which is expected to produce £2,600,000. Tobacco also suffers, with an additional duty of 8d. per pound on the manufactured article, that is estimated to bring in £1,900,000. The effect of these new duties, which have been already approved by a substantial majority in the House of Commons, has been to increase the price of beer by a penny per pint, and to add a similar sum to the cost of a glass of spirits. That is from the public side. Their effect on the Trade may, perhaps, be best gauged by Mr. Balfour's statement, made in the House of Commons on Tuesday, that in the case of one firm alone the new burdens placed upon the liquor trade would amount to £35,000, or £7000 more than it distributed to its ordinary shareholders. "You can," Mr. Balfour said, "almost hear the swish of the scorpion being applied to those unfortunate victims of Government indignation." The license proposals, Mr. Balfour contended, sounded the death knell to every house not tied to a brewer, and while English beer is taxed to the hilt, no corresponding tax has been imposed on the lighter beers imported from Bavaria. With the usual Free Traders' idea of patriotism, Mr. Lloyd-George evidently thinks that British brewers should welcome the freer importation of foreign beer to their own undoing.

TRADE TOPICS.

Tenders have been called for painting work at the Waverley Hotel, Queen Street.

Mr. C. T. Gibson, of the Criterion Hotel, Paeroa, has completed the negotiations for the purchase of Mr. E. H. White's interest in the Settlers Hotel, Whangarei. We regret to learn that Mrs. White has not been enjoying good health lately, and we hope that a rest from business will bring a speedy return to the best of health.

Mrs. S. A. Vollemaere, will continue in the business of the Railway Terminus Hotel, and is applying for the license held by her late husband.

The world's largest grape vine is to be found in Hamburg, Germany. It was planted in 1771, and is now 60in. in circumference.

Mr. T. B. O'Connor, who has had a lengthy spell of private life, has returned to the Trade again, having purchased Mr. J. H. Turnbull's interest in the Alexandra Hotel. Mr. O'Connor has had very many years of Auckland hotel-keeping experience, his last house being the Thames Hotel.

At Taihape last week, a man named Frederick Armstrong, head waiter at the Gretna Hotel, was arrested on a charge of theft of £3 from the Gretna Hotel safe. It is stated that several other charges are pending against the same accused.

At the present time there is said to be a number of enquiries for hotels in Auckland, and many changes are rumoured.

Mr. T. C. Bass, who for many years was Chief Steward in the Union S.S. Coy's employ, has given up the sea for hotel-keeping, having purchased Mr. W. Montgomery's interest in the Northern Wairoa Hotel at Dargaville. Mr. Bass having had long experience of the travelling public and of catering, particularly in the Island trade, should prove an ideal hotel-keeper. We look forward to his assumed success.

The Silich vineyard, at Hukatere, illustrates the suitability of the North Auckland climate for wine culture, an enormous crop of beautiful grapes being produced this year, and over 1000 gallons of first-class wine being made. This is a large increase upon the output for last year.

Algerian vineyards produce more grapes to the acre than any others.

A charge of supplying beer to an intoxicated person was recently brought against a barmaid in Wellington. The evidence for the defence proved that the liquor was not supplied direct to the individual in question, but to another man, who passed it on. The charge was dismissed.

£2192 10s was collected in Auckland for beer duties last month. In the corresponding month last year £2313 1s 5d was collected.

In his Budget speech in the House of Commons, last week, Mr. Lloyd George (Chancellor of the Exchequer) estimates that an increase of 8d per pound on manufactured tobacco would yield £1,900,000, and an increase of 3s 9d per gallon on spirits would yield £1,600,000. The revision of liquor licenses and a uniform percentage on the annual value would produce £2,600,000.

Duties on beer, wines, spirits, and opium are the only one in force in the Strait Settlements.

Mr. Patrick Scanlon, of Wellington, recently paid £3000 for the good-will of lease, license, and furniture of the Club Hotel, Carterton.

It is related of the late James Whistler, the gifted but eccentric American painter, that he was in Paris at the time of the coronation of the King of England, and one evening at a reception at the Hotel Ritz a duchess said to him, "Do you know King Edward, Mr. Whistler?" "No, madame," said the painter. She looked surprised. "Why, that is odd," she murmured. "I met the King at a dinner party last year, and he said that he knew you." "Oh," said Whistler, "that was only his brag."

A fire broke out in Mr. Woodward's luncheon and fruit cafe in Willis street, Wellington, last Monday. Damage estimated at £285 was done before the fire brigade suppressed the outbreak.

Owing to the revision of liquor licenses outlined by Mr. Lloyd George (Chancellor of the Exchequer)

the price of beer has been increased by a half-penny a pint and spirits by a penny a glass.

Mr. Ernest Davis, of Messrs. Handcock and Co., Ltd., has been elected Mayor of Newmarket.

Mr. Alf. Seccombe, of the Great Northern Brewery Coy., Ltd., has been re-elected a member of the Newmarket Borough Council.

The consumption of alcohol in France is decreasing. As a spirit drinker the Frenchman is only beaten by the Dane. While, roughly speaking, he only drinks one gallon of beer to the average Briton's six gallons, his total consumption of absolute alcohol makes him an easy first among the nations of the Continent, with Belgium in the second, and Switzerland in the third place.

A big fire occurred at a whiskey bonded warehouse in Belfast recently. Damage to the extent of £250,000 is reported. During the progress of the fire the streets were running with blazing spirits, and ten persons were injured.

A man who secured a meal at a Palmerston North restaurant under false pretences was recently sentenced to seven days hard labour.

A large furnishing warehouse which was destroyed by fire at Palmerston North last week, was recently purchased by Mr. Childs of the Commercial Hotel, who on figures will be come out at a loss over the insurance.

The Citizens' League had a good win over the recent City Council elections. Twelve out of their fifteen candidates being in the winning team.

Statistics for 1907, just issued by the Ministry of Finance, show that the consumption of alcohol is gradually diminishing in France. The consumption of absinthe, however, is rapidly rising.

A bill providing that no man who is twice convicted of intoxication in one year shall be allowed to be married, and that two convictions for drunkenness within a year shall be a ground for divorce, has been introduced in the States of Illinois.

The Kansas Senate has totally prohibited the use of alcohol, even for medical, scientific, and trade purposes.

The open door of the Pukekohe Hotel attracted the attention of a driven cow one afternoon last week as it was being driven up the street. The animal could not be charged with loitering on licensed premises as she charged right through the hall and into the back yard in quick time.

Representative James E. Watson, who ran for Governor of Indiana on a "dry" platform, is to be presented with a handsome punchbowl by his colleagues in the House. The gift will not be in the nature of a joke, because the Indiana member ran on a "water-waggon" ticket; but it will be a testimonial of the high esteem in which he is held by the Republican members of the House.

Mr. Thomas Mincher will act as licensee and manager of the Pukekohe Hotel during Mr. J. J. Graham's absence in England.

A witness in a recent King Country sly-grog selling case stated that whiskey was sold at from £1 to £5 per bottle.

The vineyards at the Warenga experimental station have produced some 40 tons of grapes during the past season. Some 5500 gallons of wine have been made, and the cellars are now well stocked. The Hon. A. W. Hogg, who visited the station recently, stated it is proposed to subdivide a por-