



PROHIBITION IN THE KING COUNTRY.

INDIGNANT RESIDENTS IN PROTEST.

Recent prosecutions in the King Country has served to again direct attention to the anomalous state of the law under which, while it is permissible for liquor to be taken into the prohibited area for private consumption, the possession of liquor practically constitutes an offence, the police authorities frequently seizing supplies obtained in "this" way for such private consumption, and proceeding against the owners on charges of selling, or obtaining liquor for sale, without a license. The indignation long smouldering found vent at a meeting held at Te Kuiti on Friday, at which close on 600 people were present. Mr. Jeremiah Ormsby presided and fifty telegrams were received expressing sympathy with the object of the meeting, which was to protest against the disabilities placed upon residents of the King Country, so far as the liquor laws are concerned. These included messages from Messrs. Green-slade and Jennings M's.P.

AN EMBARGO THAT SHOULD BE REMOVED.

Various speakers detailed the history of the embargo, which dated back 30 years, when the place was peopled solely by Maoris, who owned three million acres. The Government, at the request of Wahanui, a leading chief, prohibited the sale of liquor in the Rohepotae and the disposal of native lands. The Government, however, reserved the preemptive right to purchase the lands. The Maoris were now in a small minority, and possessed only three-quarters of a million acres. Settlement was essentially European, and Maoris and Europeans, including leading members of the Prohibition party, were stated to be alike of opinion that the present conditions of affairs was unsatisfactory, and that the present law, which throws the onus of proving that the liquor brought in has not been sold, upon the accused, was a travesty of much-vaunted British freedom and fair play. The speakers thought the time had arrived when residents of the King Country should be placed on an equal footing with those of other parts of the Dominion. A resolution was carried expressing the opinion "that the present licensing law as applied in the King Country is unsatisfactory and irksome, and that the time has arrived when the present restrictions, as far as liquor is concerned, be removed, and the district placed on the same footing as regards local option as the people of other parts of the Dominion." The residents of Te Kuiti are of opinion that several reputable citizens have been wrongly convicted of sly-grog selling of late through being unable to prove a negative, and feeling is running very high there just now.

A bill prohibiting all import and sale of intoxicants in any shape or form, even in cakes, sweets, or chocolate, has been introduced in the Icelandic Parliament. The bill further ordains that ships arriving in Iceland shall have their stock of spirits and other alcoholic beverages under seal whilst in Icelandic waters, and that those seals may only be released by the authorities when the ship leaves. For manufacturing and medicinal purposes, alcohol will be imported and sold by the Government in denaturalised state. It is said that the bill has every prospect of becoming law, as a vote of the people, which preceded its introduction, is in favour of absolute prohibition of any kind of alcohol.

TRADE TOPICS.

In Berlin is a club which has a curtain made of champagne corks. The four thousand corks used represent an expenditure of over £4000.

Messrs. Dwan Bros. report having sold Mr. George Searle's interest in the Royal Hotel, Palmerston North, to Mr. George Foster, formerly proprietor of the Imperial Hotel, Auckland; lease, furniture and goodwill of the Manawatu Hotel, Foxton, to Mr. Hadfield, late of Wellington; Mr. James Meagher's interest in the Wairarua Hotel, Levin, to Mr. William H. Higgins, formerly proprietor of the Masterton railway refreshment rooms; the lease, furniture and goodwill of the Trafalgar Hotel, Nelson, to Mr. Walter H. Long, formerly in aerated water business in Wellington; Mrs. Keppler's interest in the lease and furniture of the Columbia Private Hotel, Lower Cuba street, Wellington, to Mr. John Browne (a new arrival from London, where he was connected with large catering business); also the lease of the Club Hotel, Carterton, to Mr. George Harden, late of Kilbirnie and Blenheim.

A Wellington report states that Mr. George Foster, formerly of the Imperial Hotel, Fort street, has purchased Mr. George Searle's interest in the Royal Hotel, Palmerston North. Mr. Foster while in the Imperial Hotel, made himself exceedingly popular with the public and his fellow licensees in Auckland. He was for some time secretary of the L.V. Association taking a keen and intelligent interest in all matters pertaining to the well-fare of his Association. His many friends and late associates will wish him the best of health and good fortune in his new home.

Mr. C. C. Kettle, S.M., who no doubt from his official seat sees a good deal of the light and shade in life, remarked the other morning: "There are very few people who are really teetotal, though a lot pretend to be who are not."

At the Gisborne Police Court, last week, a man named Dennis F. Barry was fined £30 with costs, or in default one month's imprisonment, on a charge of having sold grog without a license on the Government co-operative works at Gold Creek, on the Gisborne-Motu railway line.

Auckland hotels have again experienced a busy week, many of them being unable to satisfy the demand for accommodation. Holiday attractions, and the Winter Exhibition, causing a large influx of country visitors.

During the past three years the Otaki Licensing Committee refused to grant any conditional publicans' licenses, and therefore there were no publicans' booths at the Otaki races. Now, however, that the Moderate men are on the Licensing Bench, permission has been granted for the issue of conditional licenses, and there will be two booths at the forthcoming Otaki races.

Mr. J. Hunt, who took over the Freeman's Hotel quite recently, had an unwelcome visitor last Thursday night in the shape of a burglar, who got away with a few pounds in coin, and some bottles of spirits.

In connection with the recent prosecution of a barman for making a wager in a hotel, it is only fair to the present licensee to record that the betting transaction took place before his occupancy of the hotel.

Modern Japanese coins and banknotes bear legends in English as well as Japanese.

Mr. Albert Bruntnell, secretary of the New South Wales Alliance, referring to Mr. Rankin's recent report on the New Zealand licensing laws, said it was as fair a report as could be expected from a gentleman who had hurried through the Dominion in three weeks. Mr. Rankin's bogey seemed to be the skeleton in the No-license cupboard, or, in other words, drinking in the home. There was no evidence in support of this. It was merely assumption.

We may here remark that a good many anti-liquor arguments are not only assumptions but presumptions and much more. However, in defence of Mr. Bruntnell's skeleton, we would like a few words on the increasing consumption of liquor in spite of dry areas, and some for the anything but skeleton imports by rail and sea, of liquor into dry areas.

Mr. John G. Woolley, of Chicago, the Prohibition party's candidate for president in 1900 (who visited Wellington some years ago), has renounced the party and will hereafter become active in one of the old political organisations. Mr. Woolley believes that the Prohibition party, as such, has accomplished all the good it can, and that the most effective temperance work can now be carried on outside its lines. He states that the party served its purpose in bringing the liquor question to a national issue, and then its influence ended. Mr. Woolley for a number of years practiced law in the West and in New York, and held some municipal offices, but afterwards he entered the lecture field and has since spoken in the leading cities of the world. He made tours of the world, advocating prohibition, in 1901 and 1905. He is the author of a number of books that have had a considerable sale.

On the recent voyage of the barque Joseph Craig, from Auckland to the Kaipara, a quantity of bottled beer was shipped from here to Dargaville. The quality of this portion of the cargo proved too seductive for three members of the crew, who are now serving terms of imprisonment for breaking into the ships hold and stealing two dozen bottles of beer.

Hon. Dr. Findlay, the other morning informed a very large deputation that there were two courses of action open to them regarding the charges of corruption against a former Ohinemuri Licensing Committee. Either they could place their evidence before the police, with a request for a prosecution, if satisfied that a prima facie case existed; or they could take the matter into their own hands and institute criminal proceedings.

Apropos of his name, Sir James Lewar, tells an amusing story of how, when in the Highlands of Scotland one summer, he stopped at a farmhouse for a cup of milk. "What a superb place to live in!" he remarked to the farmer. "Ou, aye," he answered, "it's a' right; but hoo wad ye like to hae to walk fifteen mile lik a time ye wanted a wee glass o' whisky?" "Why don't you get a bottle and keep it in the house?" Sir James suggested. The farmer shook his head sadly and said, "Whisky won't keep."

While digging in a hole at the Savoy Hotel, London, the other day, the workmen came across some fossilised oysters. It is calculated the oysters were 80,000 years of age, and were fresh in the pre-glacial period.

The first prize in the Victorian eight-hours' art union, valued at £500, was won by Mr. E. J. Gallagher, licensee of the Clare Castle Hotel, Exhibition street, Melbourne. On 5th ultimo Mr. Gallagher was given 25 tickets to sell, and he had the good fortune to keep, amongst others, the one which gained the prize.

The condition of affairs in the King Country, arising out of the fact that prohibition under an old agreement with a Maori Chief is strictly enforced, is causing much indignation among the thousands of Europeans who have now settled within the prohibition area. A largely attended meeting at Te Kuiti, last Friday, voiced the opinion that the present law is unsatisfactory and irksome.

The average "official" mind is sadly wanting in common sense, the officials responsible for the carrying out of "The Dairy Industry Act," particularly so. No wonder men blaspheme against the Government and all its works, when prosecutions take place of the character of that recorded at Dannevirke the other day. A certain hotelkeeper there, Mr. Henry Baker, licensee of the Club Hotel, who keeps his own cows to make sure of the milk supply for his hotel was actually proceeded against by the local Inspector of Dairies for selling milk from an unregistered dairy, the Department holding that, by selling tea or coffee, with milk in it there was a sale within the meaning of the Act referred to. The Magistrate (sensible man), very properly held that the provision of milk with meals or drink did not constitute a sale, and gave judgment for the defendant, though he somewhat spoilt a sensible decision by not awarding costs against the Department. The prosecution, which in itself is a travesty of justice, should not be lost sight of; the attention of Parliament should be drawn to it, so that the combs of those two penny-half-penny inspectors may be cut, before some irate subject of their meddlesome interferences does them and himself also, an inevitable injury.

At Te Kuiti last Thursday, a number of liquor prosecutions were decided by Mr. F. O'B. Loughnan. For having kept liquor for sale within a Prohibition area, Charles Charlotte was fined £50 and costs amounting to £5 12s; Francis Keane, £20, and £5 costs; J. M. Bird, £20, and costs £5 12s; and Frederick Henwood, recently a publican at Kihikihi, was fined 10s, and costs amounting to £6 8s, for having sold liquor after hours.

The annual meeting of the Manukau Licensing Committee will be held at Onehunga on June 7. Keen interest is felt by all those concerned in this meeting owing to the fact that three out of the thirteen hotels in the district will lose their license as the result of the reduction last November. None of the licenses in the Manukau electorate have been endorsed. The following are names of the committee; Dr. W. G. Scott, Messrs. W. Westney, G. Fleming, D. Hattaway, and J. Flannagan. Mr. H. W. Northcroft, S.M., is chairman of the Manakau Licensing Committee.

Speaking at the annual dinner of the Commercial Travellers' and Warehousemen's Association, on Saturday evening, the president (Mr. J. F. Connelly) said that the membership of the association now stood at 500, and he hoped that the day was not far distant when they would be able to build a handsome residential club.

The proprietor of the Turarua vineyard (Mr. Lamb) has been advised by a high legal authority, that the carrying of no-license in Masterton will not affect his business in the manufacture and sale of wine. We, however, incline to the opinion that the sale of wine within the prohibited area will be illegal.

Statistics are quoted which have been gathered in the State of Maine during the past year which go to show the sham and impossibility of prohibition voted and maintained as a matter of emotion and sentiment unaccompanied by any rational measures to insure law enforcement.