

The LICENSED VICTUALLERS

THE LICENSING MEETINGS.

The result of the annual meetings of the various licensing committees throughout the colony have not been such as to call for any extraordinary comment. The committees, on the whole, even in those places where the administration of licensing affairs has been placed (most improperly) in the hands of partisans, have shown a clear disposition to do justice. In Dunedin, where reduction was carried (and over which sweeps at present a wave of most uncommon righteousness), certain drastic "reforms" are to accompany the partial suppression of the trade. The barmaid is to go, and with her the second bar, but beyond inflicting hardship upon a generally respectable class of young women, it is hard to see what this "reform" will effect.

In Bruce and Newtown (Wellington) where no-license votes were carried to be afterwards upset on petition, the committees have seen fit to arrogate to themselves the powers of the Legislature, and to refuse to grant renewals. An appeal to the Supreme Court must follow, with a possibly of fresh legislation in the background, but the proceedings point very conclusively to the propriety of removing the licensing law administration from popular control, which means the control of party, and securing absolute impartiality. It will be noted with satisfaction that the Premier evidently intends to move in this direction.

In Port Chalmers and Ashburton the experiences of Clutha are about to be repeated. The residents will not be deprived of liquor, only they will consume it in their homes instead of in the hotels, but the unfortunate travelling public will have to go dry or seek the consolation offered by the sly grog-seller. Which leads one to ask why Sir Joseph Ward should have so eagerly capitulated in the matter of the railway refreshment room. The uses of this institution might surely be confined to travellers without much trouble. But it is one of the puzzles, that the present Government, which has shown such a courageous front to nearly all the elements opposing it, should have so readily kow-towed to the frenetic prohibitionist.

In Auckland the Trade have no complaint to make regarding committees, who have acted, apparently, on business principles, but they have a serious grievance against the police. The slur cast upon every hotel by the unchanging formula in the police report, "fairly well conducted," is not only undeserved but most improper. Police "suspicion" is no justification for condemning anything, and to flaunt it as the police do is most offensive. We do not think any of the houses have earned the description referred to, while in the case of the leading residential hotels the expression is a gratuitous insult, not only to the proprietors, but to the large body of the public who patronise them. The time is ripe for reform in this connection. The inspection of hotels should be placed in the hands of experts, as factories and other things are, and relieved of the stigma of police espionage, which, chiefly because it imparts a flavour of criminality into the business, is so largely taken advantage of by the procurers of the teetotal party.

It will have been observed that the ten o'clock license is now general in this Province. The last places to fall in with this rule are Devonport and Northcote. In some other places eleven o'clock has been retained, but this is a matter of small importance compared with the huge injustice that has been wrought by the operation of no-license and reduction votes. But reaction will come, and come soon; of that we are assured. The people of New Zealand will not consent to be classed as children and agree to eat and drink according to the ideas of a few fanatics.

TEETOTALLERS O' THE SPREE.

The Prohibition votaries are just now engaging in what, in their exuberance, they call "rallies." The term may be taken to mean a sort of hysterical conferences, though in some countries a "rally" signifies a "spree." The difference is trifling, and it is quite certain that intoxication may be induced without recourse to alcohol. Teetotal drunkenness is, moreover, a much worse, a much more degrading type of inebriety than that brought on by beer. Both kinds are to be deprecated, but at the worst it may be said of the last-mentioned that it is not incompatible with generous sentiments, while the heart of the professional prohibitionist is cold as ice.

Even the jokes of the prohibitionist are chilly. He has a little rhyme which states that whereas the teetotaler wants

There is a mournful evidence of the degeneracy that follows from total abstinence in the statement made by the Chairman of the No-License Conference at Newton, Mr Wesley Spragg, that Mr William Richardson is deserving of honour. Mr Spragg has made himself conspicuous on several occasions by his intemperate denunciation of the Trade, but we had up to last week credited him with ideals. Alas, there is nothing ideal about Richardson, and as for Mr Spragg now—well, a man is known by the company he keeps.

That may be, but one would not take the 82-year-old judge to be always in 'total abstainer senses,' especially when he is so erratic as to give a little boy seven years for arson, and a few weeks afterwards to let a full-grown man go scot free for a similar offence; not to speak of allowing on the other hand, his high court and position to be brought into disrepute by a fanatic like Billy Richardson, who tickled the Judge up and brow-beat him all he knew.—Both 'total abstainers.' What a recommendation to be sure."

It is understood that the Rob Roy Hotel, Freeman's Bay, has changed hands, and that a transfer of the license from Mr Regan will shortly be applied for. Mr Regan is one of the oldest hotelkeepers in Auckland, and has continuously conducted the Rob Roy for almost as long a period as Mr Kidd was in the Commercial.

Trade Topics

An hotelkeeper in the South has been fined for serving with whiskey milk not obtained from a registered dairy. He kept a cow.

The Grey Lynn Committee decided to close the Arch Hill Hotel, and to grant a renewal to the Eden Vine. By the terms of the Act, reduction having been carried, one of the two houses in the district had to be closed, and the matter had been practically arranged with the owners. It is understood that Mrs Dempsey, of the Arch Hill Hotel, will be compensated. The owners of both houses are the Campbell-Ehrenfried Company.

"It is becoming quite 'the thing' in high circles to drink the fresh vintages of Australia in preference to old ones of France," says the "Distilleries, Brewers, and Spirit Merchants' Magazine." "And the very fact that the taste in wine has fluctuated with change of fashion ought to be of good augury to our colonial wine. There is no reason why the remarkable progress made in the improvement of the Australian vineyards should not be indefinitely extended, or why in a few years the Mother Country should not obtain almost the whole of her wine from her own colonies. Australia has done wonders."

John Heinrich Gattsche, a well-known brewer of Palmerston North (N.Z.), is taking out patent rights for improvements in boilers, or boiler pans, used in breweries, soapworks, and other places of manufacture.

A very pleasant ceremony took place at the Commercial Hotel, Auckland, on the eve of the departure of Mr and Mrs Kidd. At a dinner to the staff, occasion was taken to present an address to the host and hostess, expressive of the esteem in which they were held by their employees, to whom they had always been not only considerate but generous. Mrs Kidd was presented with a very handsome dressing case as a memento of very pleasant days. Mr Kidd very feelingly replied.

Mr Chas. Cress, proprietor of the Occidental Hotel, Masterton, has, on the advice of his medical adviser, decided to retire from business for a short period, and has sold his interest in the Occidental to Mr O'Meara. Mr Cress will visit the Hot Springs for a few weeks.

Says an English trade paper:—The Liberal leaders mean to oppose to the end any Compensation Bill, as well as any endeavour to restrain the hands of the licensing justices. So we know what to expect from that quarter! Sir Wilfrid Lawson propounds a paradox—but, then, one never expected anything but jokes (more or less good or bad) from Sir Wilfrid. He says: "The only way in which the nation can successfully ward off this latest raid on its property is by sticking to it that not a halfpenny of public money shall be paid to people who have made money by selling drink, and to whom it is now proposed to pay money because they do not sell drink." Now I should like to put to Sir Wilfrid, an owner of something over 8,000 acres of land, this query: Suppose, by the action of an arbitrary body of Socialists, his property was selected for confiscation, and the landlord class robbed, as we are being robbed; how would he, in such a case, regard the opinion "that not a halfpenny of public money shall be paid to people who have made money by letting land, and to whom it is proposed to pay money because they are prevented from letting land"?



MR. S. J. ATKINS,
successor to Mr Alfred Kidd at the Commercial Hotel.

to destroy spiders' webs, the Trade is desirous of educating flies. This must be a capital pleasantry for those who take alcoholic refreshment in moderation, and who have heretofore believed that they had a perfect right to drink what they pleased. It is not a new joke either, for the spiders and flies of the no-license humorist are just the rogues and fools of older philosophers.

But teetotalers go a little further, and infer the existence of a third division, which not having the attributes of the others must of necessity be angelic, and in this they modestly class themselves. Yet they are not exclusive or bigoted, for they hold that spiders and flies can be converted into angels by Acts of Parliament, and that there is plenty of room in the heaven where they dwell. May the gods protect us from such a "heaven," filled with slanderers and backbiters, and that worst of all possible things, the "self-righteous!"

The Franklin Licensing Committee, which exercises jurisdiction over the country between Pukekohe and Ngaruawahia, has decided not to grant conditional licenses in the district, but permission may be given for rooms in licensed houses to be used for banquets after 10 o'clock, provided that no liquor is served during prohibited hours. It is time the Premier's reform arrived!

At the meeting of the Waitemata Licensing Committee, a license was granted to the new Flagstaff Hotel, to be henceforth known as "The Esplanade," at Devonport. Mrs Lindsay, the outgoing licensee, applied for a license for the old premises conducted by her, and opposed the transfer, on the ground chiefly that the owners had refused to take over her furniture, but the application was not entertained.

Frank Mackenzie gets this rather good one off in the "Northern Luminary":—"Judge Conolly enlightened the Court the other day, by stating he had been a total abstainer for over thirty years."

MR S. J. ATKINS.

The new proprietor of the Commercial Hotel, so long conducted by Mr and Mrs Alfred Kidd, is Mr Samuel J. Atkins, whose portrait is given on this page. Mr Atkins is well and favourably known in Auckland, having been for three years manager of the Working Men's Club, an institution that owes a great deal to his careful and experienced direction. Since then he has been, for about three and a-half years' licensee of the Royal Mail Hotel (Crosbie's) at Paeroa. Mr Atkins is a native of London, and was brought up to the licensed victualling trade. He was engaged in some of the best houses in the great metropolis, and had considerable experience in the shipping trade. He came to the Colonies in 1886, and was for some time in the Otago Province and on the coast. Mr Atkins seems to have been cut out for the business to which he has now succeeded, and in his hands the Commercial is certain to maintain its high standard. No changes have been made in the staff, Mr Atkins proceeding on the principle of "letting well alone."