

MR SEDDON FURTHER EXPLAINS.

THE ISITT VIEW.

Speaking on the liquor question to a "Wellington Times" representative, on Monday, Mr Seddon repeated that the committee should not arrogate to themselves the powers which are vested in the Legislature alone. "And not only that," he continued, "but they make themselves ridiculous, especially when, as in the case of the Dunedin Committee, the Chairman has afterwards publicly and officially stated that the law would not support the Committee in what it had indicated it was about to do."

"Has the Government finally decided yet as to whether it will bring in any liquor legislation during the session?" "Now, you are asking too much," said Mr. Seddon. "All the Ministers are here now, and full meetings of the Cabinet will be the order for the week. The action of the Government may be precipitated or otherwise by the actions of the Committees. At all events, it is the duty of the Government, as well as of Parliament, to see that the existing law is adhered to, and if any amendment is required to make it perfect, I think the people of Port Chalmers should not be denied the right of having their petition heard through the mistake of a magistrate. There seems to be a missing link in the law in respect to the situation in Bruce and Newtown. As this matter is before the law courts you will excuse me not saying anything further."

The Rev. F. W. Isitt, interviewed by the "Wellington Post," says that the Premier's suggestions for substituting magistrates for elective licensing committees, and for colonial in place of local option, will be determinedly opposed by the Prohibition party. If he persists the Premier will meet with such solid and energetic political opposition as he never hitherto contemplated.

"COMPENSATION" IN ENGLAND.

The Birmingham Brewers' Association, at a meeting held last month, decided to withdraw from the scheme of license surrender, which has been carried out in conjunction with the magistrates. The resolution sets forth that the members "are unanimously of opinion that the views recently expressed by Mr Arthur Chamberlain on the Licensing Question are directly opposed to the principles of equity and justice; that the surrender scheme as expounded by him offers no final solution of the licensing difficulty, and, therefore, they now feel compelled to do all in their power to secure Parliamentary protection."

Mr Lawson Walton has evolved a compensation scheme which, while it may tend to get over the insurance problem (says the London Trade organ), still has the wrongful element of robbing the Peters of the Trade in order to pay the Pauls. The idea is that the wrongful cancellation of licenses shall only be done once in every seven years, and then only as regards a given proportion, fixity of tenure for each term of seven years being given to those that are left. Thus, if one-tenth of the existing licenses were extinguished after seven years, each licensee during the term would have to contribute to a common fund one-seventieth of the value of his license. For the second seven years we should have nine licenses where there were originally ten, so each licensee would be mulcted at the rate of one-sixty-third per annum. The third term would increase the yearly contribution to one-fifty-seventh, the fourth to one-fiftieth, and so on, rising each term, until we should arrive at the reductio ad absurdum of the one man left providing his own compensation! And all the while the wronged Trade, robbed for what the advocates for reduction call a public benefit, would have to pay by way of a private wrong!

Owing to the adverse reports presented by Constable McGilp and Dr. Magill (there is a curious similarity in the names) the Waikato Licensing Committee have postponed consideration of the applications for renewal of the Cambridge hotel licenses pending inspection. No fault is found with the conduct of the houses, though there is the usual expression of suspicion, but the buildings are declared to be old, worm-eaten, and otherwise unsatisfactory. From personal knowledge we are convinced that the complaints are much exaggerated, and we would again point out how unfair it is to expect that owners of licensed property should spend large sums of money until the question of compensation has been settled in an honest and equitable way.

Mr A. A. Stewart, who has resumed the proprietorship of that favourite hostelry, the Windsor Castle, in Parnell, has already effected many changes that will be appreciated by the patrons of the house. Mr Stewart knows the trade as well as most people, having got a good grounding under his father, who is very favourably remembered as licensee of the Thames Hotel.

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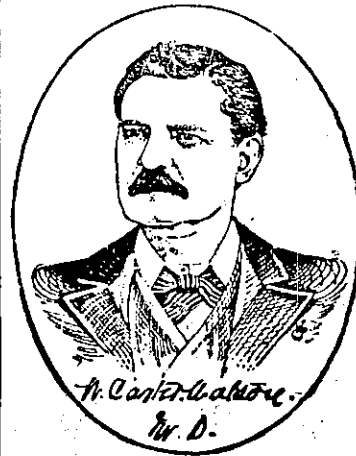
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