

simply nothing. The Peter Teazles of the Testotal party are peevish and suspicious, the while our grievance against the Premier is that he gives them no reason for their loss of confidence. The abolitionists are deceived in him without a cause, and it is high time that, in compliment to their discernment, he did something to merit their mistrust. He has promised, as Mr Van Biene would say, fluently, to emancipate the Trade from the thralldom of an iniquitous perversion of the spirit of law by which a body of bigoted faddists are permitted to abuse their discretion to inflict wilful, wanton, and wicked hardship upon the largest contributors to the national revenue in the kingdom.

In common with every clear-thinking, unprejudiced man throughout the country, Mr Balfour has recognised and raised his voice against the gross injury of these unjust confiscations, and he has given us every reason to hope that the further perpetration of this glaring public evil will be arrested. The justices, who in February last wiped out 639 licenses by way of sharpening their claws against the wholesale slaughter they threaten to perpetrate at the next Annual Licensing Sessions, plead in extenuation of their conduct that they are acting in the public interests. They forget that their predecessors in office had, in the public interest, granted these licenses to men who, also in the public interest, have laid out their money in improving their property and devoted the best years of their lives in conducting their business in such a manner as to show the selves entirely worthy of the confidence reposed in them. And the law, on the face of it, expresses the intentions of the legislators who framed it, and who had no idea of confiscating any license except in cases where the holder had shown himself unfitted to his trust. The rights vested in the publican when he received his license and embarked in the most anxious and harassing trade in which a man can invest his money and reputation, were bestowed in the interests and for the good of the public, and Mr Chamberlain has declared, and reiterated his declaration, that whenever the State for the public good confiscated private rights the State was bound to give compensation.

One is nauseated by this canting twaddle about acting for the public good when it emanates from men who are only actuated by private prejudices. The policy of doing evil that good may come of it is as dead as Jesuitism in England

—the savages who murdered the Royal lovers in Belgrade last week took shelter behind this specious and exploded fallacy. The magistrates who advance this plea are fighting for authority to force their narrow and bigoted views down the throats of the community at large without regard to the rights of the publican or the requirements of the public, whose interests they profess themselves so zealous to safeguard. They will resist with all their powers any measure that threatens to come between them and their object, and resent any attempt "to fetter so as practically to destroy their existing discretion." Mr Arthur Chamberlain regards the two restrictive measures now before Parliament as the practical expression of such a desire, and he denounces them, on that account, as "impostures, frauds, and delusions." The brother of the great Mr Chamberlain, whose dictum on this matter we have quoted, is right in his opinion of the nature and aim of the measures which are associated with the names of Lord Wemyss and Sir William Hart-Dyke respectively. They represent very faithfully the feeling of the public of this country and the determination of the Trade.

As a simple act of common justice we demand that Government shall take the necessary steps to prevent further unwarranted and arbitrary confiscation of licensed property by the licensing justices. We ask the Government to do what they so frankly declared their willingness to do, but which is yet to do. As Lord Burton, in commenting on the Government's apathy at the mass meeting held in Burton-on-Trent on Tuesday, asserted, "they expressed much sympathy, but they had done nothing." On the same day the chairman of the Central Board, at a mass meeting of those interested in the licensed trade held at Derby, said he was in a position to assure his hearers that they had the entire sympathy of His Majesty's Government. It is very nice to be told that "the members of the Trade could never get a Government more desirous to do justice to them"; it sounds promising, but we are getting weary of promises, and even vague sympathy begins to cloy. We have waited with exemplary patience for these promises to fructify; for that sympathy to assume practical form. We have had enough "cackle," and we would fain come to the "osses." Mr Arthur

Chamberlain has warned Mr Balfour that "this hostility to the magistrates, this fellowship with the Trade, might bear bitter fruit," but the fruit will be much more bitter unless Mr Balfour makes up his mind to give practical effect to his hostility to magisterial injustice, and some tangible token of his fellowship with the Trade.

The so-called Licensing Reform Association, in Gisborne, is making a great deal of fuss, but the sum total of the business done so far, beyond a large amount of bickering between the members, is to prepare petitions against further employment of barmaids, and in favour of the inspection of liquor. Such meddling can do no good to either side.

Several hotel burglaries have taken place in Auckland. During the past few days both the Hobson and the Swan Hotels have been entered, and in each case the thief got away with money or valuables. The fire-escape was the medium in the latter case.

The question of the right to supply liquor in any way to a prohibited district is to be tried at Christchurch. Mr Fredk. Cross, of that city, has been proceeded against on a charge of advertising a certain brand of whisky in an Ashburton newspaper, the information being laid under that section of the Act which says it shall not be lawful to solicit or receive an order for liquor in a no-license district. The case is proceeding.

The Tied Houses Bill in the Upper House has been productive of a considerable amount of hostility, as being too drastic, and aiming less at "reform" than to destroy the Trade. The debate on the second reading has not yet concluded, but judging from appearances there is not much danger of the measure passing, in its present form at any rate.

The members of the Trade who have assembled in Wellington with the view of bringing their claims under the direct notice of the Government and Parliament number about 200, and include representatives from all parts of the colony. Their object is to endeavour to get something

like finality in licensing law, and placing the Trade upon a level with others on the matter of legal protection. Amongst other things advocated is the adoption of a uniform hour of closing eleven o'clock in the centres of population and ten o'clock in the country. There is a growing feeling in the country that too much consideration has been given to the unjust and unfair demands of the prohibition party, and that the Premier by his recent pronouncement in favour of absolute prohibition, has disclosed the weak spot in the armour of the fanatical no-license advocates.

A mass meeting of the Birmingham and District Licensing Trade was held at the Town Hall, Birmingham, on the 18th ult., to consider the question of compensation to licensees deprived of their licenses for the public interest. Mr Francis W. Lowe, M.P., presided, and the hall was crowded. The chairman, in opening the proceedings, said he was in favour of compensation for licenses taken away for public purposes. Alluding to the licensing crusade in Birmingham, he remarked that Mr Arthur Chamberlain, chairman of the licensing justices, and some of his colleagues, appeared to have allowed their zeal as temperance reformers to outrun their discretion. There was, he said, absolutely no excuse for further delay, after the exhaustive report of the Royal Commission. Mr Reginald Mortimer proposed a resolution urging the Government to take immediate action for giving practical effect to Mr Butcher's Bill. Mr Moore Bayley seconded the resolution. Sir Albert Muntz, M.P., said those engaged in the Trade had grave reason to complain of the treatment received throughout the country. In forty years' experience as a magistrate, he could not remember a single instance in which a man's license had been taken away except for bad conduct. They had to consider not merely the letter of the law, but the custom. He failed to see the difference between licensed property and other kinds of property. He questioned whether it was fair to the Trade that the whole compensation for a license taken away for public good should come out of the pockets of the Trade. He entirely disagreed with the view that by reducing licenses they would diminish drinking. The resolution was carried with acclamations.

CENTRAL HOTEL

QUEEN STREET, MASTERTON.

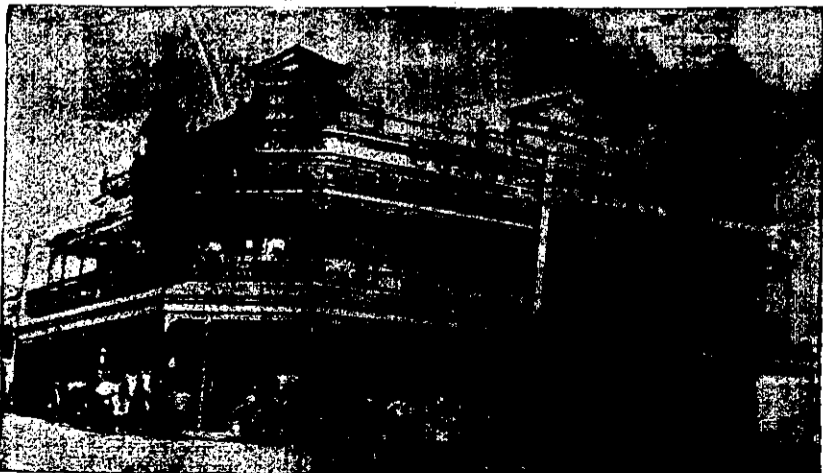


The Best Appointed and Most Up-to-date Inland Hotel in the Colony.

Tourists Specially Catered for.

First-class Chef.

F. D. HODGINS
(Late of Marton),
Proprietor.



Coronation Hotel, ELTHAM.

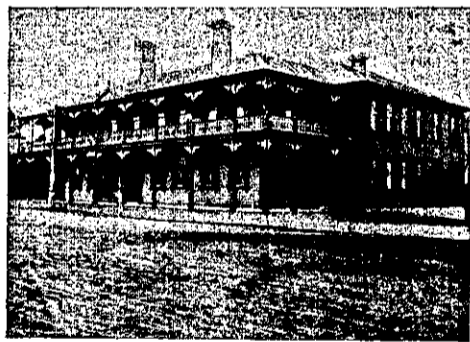
JAMES HAWKINS, PROPRIETOR.

The above splendid new Hotel is now open for the accommodation of the Public. Special Provision for Comfort of Travellers. Best Brands of Liquors in Stock.

HAMILTON HOTEL

Hamilton, Waikato.

W. H. BRIGHT, Proprietor.



New Hotel (Front View).



BACK VIEW (Showing the River).

Terms: 5s. per diem; 30s. per week.



Clarendon Club Hotel, NAPIER.

The most central and convenient FAMILY HOTEL in Napier, and the recognized resort of Cricketers, Footballers, and other Sportsmen.

The best of everything at most moderate rates. Special terms for Parties. Only the Best Brands of Wines and Spirits kept. Speight's Dunedin and Newbiggin's Special Brews on draught.

Telephone No. 90.

J. D. FISCHER, Proprietor.