

An "indignation" meeting of the more violent of the temperance party was held at the Foresters' Hall, Auckland, on Monday, at which some resolutions, insulting alike to the Government and Parliament were passed in reference to the Newtown licences. There is no virtue outside these howling dervishes apparently.

Some amusement was recently excited in the bar of the Devonshire Arms, Mile End, London, by the presence of an unusual customer. An elephant which is performing at an East End music hall, when passing the public-house, was apparently struck with its clean and orderly appearance, and quietly walked inside. In the bar he opened his mouth as a gentle hint to the company that he would not regard an invitation to drink as an insult. But a question arose as to whether he could be served without a breach of the Licensing Act. As he was understood to be under the age of fourteen years, the opinion prevailed that under the provisions of the Child Messenger Act he could only be served with liquor in a sealed bottle. After some consideration it was thought that the bottle might interfere with his digestion, so it was decided to request him to leave the premises. Resenting this inhospitable treatment, the elephant in his exit smashed the glass panel of the door and carried away some of the framework.

The Innkeepers' Liability Bill has not yet passed through the House of Commons, but there are magistrates, it appears, who are eager and ready to anticipate its provisions. The New Mills Bench (Chester), not satisfied with administering laws, are quite prepared to make them on their own account. It appears that some of the magistrates are annoyed because the local innkeepers have not supplied bread and butter and a cup of tea when asked for the same; and, before granting the temporary transfer of several licences, they have extracted an undertaking from each applicant that he would provide reasonable refreshment in the shape of food whenever asked. This Bench maintains that it has the power, and intends to enforce the condition as to the supply of food in the future. Further, the magistrates have given the licensed victuallers to understand that their licences will be seriously imperilled if there is any breach of these conditions in future. The chair-

man added that the Bench were quite unanimous on the subject, and "as the licences were granted for one year only strict inquiry would be made at the annual licensing sessions." One is tempted to ask, if the licensing magistrates profess to have this power already, what is the need of taking up the time of the House of Commons with the Innkeepers' Liability Bill.—(L.V.G.)

A familiar figure in Glasgow, and one well known to many members of the Trade elsewhere, has just passed away in the person of Mr John Watson, wine and whisky merchant, of West George Street. Cut off in the prime of life, Mr Watson, who has been foremost in championing Trade interests—having for the long period of fifteen years been president of the Glasgow Licensed Trade Defence Association—had earned the thanks of all for the tactful and conciliatory manner in which he dealt with thorny questions affecting the licensing interests, and his advice was freely sought in the framing of the new Scottish Licensing Bill, which is now passing through Parliament. Mr Watson, who was in his forty-seventh year, joined his father in 1875, and three years later, on the latter's retirement, assumed sole command of the business, the ramifications of which extended far and wide. A great reader, Mr Watson possessed one of the finest libraries in all Scotland, and as a platform speaker he had few equals amongst members of the Trade in the North, who will deeply regret his demise.

Commenting on the decision of the South Australian Government to discontinue the support given in the interests of wine producers to the London depot, the "Wine and Spirit Journal" says:—"With all the energy displayed in its development and the good work indisputably accomplished by the venture, it seems a pity that the depot should pass out of public hands. It says little for the gratitude of the average Australian grower that no mention is made or recognition shown (as far as one may judge from the reports) of the arduous struggle the manager and his assistants have had to bear. However, we shall see whether private enterprise can create the increased demand that the wine growers think possible in this country."

Mr Lindsay Cooke's many friends will hear with much satisfaction that he has decided to re-enter the ranks of the Trade. He has purchased the interest of Mr Drake in the Metropolitan Hotel, and he may be expected to maintain the character of that finely and centrally situated house. Mr Cooke for many years conducted the Albert Hotel, and has a host of friends in town and country. He takes possession in two or three weeks.

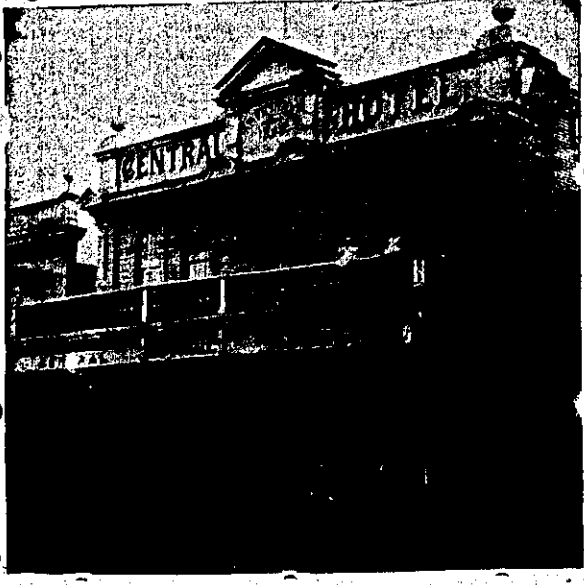
Let it not be supposed for one moment (remarks the London Trade organ) since the Lord Chancellor has intimated that the Government propose early in the approaching Session to deal with the question of justices' justice, in so far as the renewal of licenses is concerned—not to say the whole question of confiscation and compensation—that the Trade can rest on its laurels. The official announcement will only serve to goad the enemy on to battle; in fact, a brisk bombardment will take place to-day. That the opposing forces are well marshalled none can gainsay. The veteran Sir Wilfrid Lawson, although he has passed the allotted span of three score years and ten, is once more in the stirrups, and bold general that he is, he has promised to lead his men to victory! The scene of action to-day is the Royal Albert Hall, and the general's staff comprises many officers who have fought well in the past. One need only mention a few. There are the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Monkswell, Sir Robert Reid, M.P., Sir J. H. Haslett, M.P., Mr Cameron Corbett, M.P., Mr T. W. Russell, M.P., Mr Arthur Chamberlain, J.P., and the Lord Mayors of Sheffield and of York. The arena has been selected in order that the forces may be brought up in their thousands. They have been called together "to protest against Parliament proceeding with Mr Eutcher's Bill, or the giving of Government sanction to Sir W. Hart Dyke's Bill, to suspend magisterial powers to refuse to renew licences that are deemed excessive." As neither of these measures will be proceeded with, and as Lord Wemyss has withdrawn his Bill, the tactics will no doubt be altered, and presumably the protest will be against the Government dealing with the subject aimed at in all three, in any shape or form whatever.

The Bishop of London, in deprecating any action that would tamper with the freedom of action of the justices, reminded his hearers that the magistrates had been in possession of those privileges and responsibilities for 350 years, but he forgot to mention that it is only in recent years that they have misconceived their responsibilities and exaggerated their privileges to such an extent as to make a curtailment of their legal powers, and a diminution of their discretion, absolutely necessary. It may be that a new Cabinet may be in office next year—that the Lord Chancellor may not be on the woolsack next session, and the condition of parties may be entirely changed; but Sir Wilfrid Lawson and his cohorts may be assured that whoever is on the woolsack next session, and whichever party is in power, it will be a party pledged to see that justice is done to the licensed community, and that licensed victuallers are not done by the justices.

Already the teetotal faddists in England, enraged at the prospect of the Government tardily doing something to stop their programme of spoliation, are planning for a series of "indignation meetings," petitions, and other forms of protest. While they are banding themselves together, the Trade must show a united front, and not stand idle until too late, as heretofore. Our enemies have been for ever on the alert to seize every opportunity of doing us damage. The judge-made law of "Sharpe v. Wakefield" has been unscrupulously used. Then, taking advantage of the fact that avowed enemies of the Trade can sit upon licensing benches, and men with the barest indirect interest in it cannot, we have seen the benches packed, openly and undisguisedly, as in the Crystal Palace case. Packed benches have gone outside the law in being "a law unto themselves," and have sought to institute all sorts of illegal rules and regulations for the hampering of the licensed victualler. And, of course, they are "hurt" to find there is a prospect of their own license being stopped!—(London paper.)

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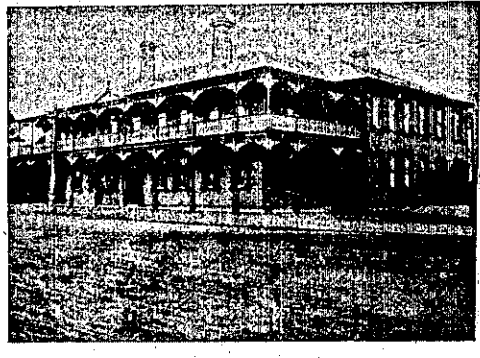
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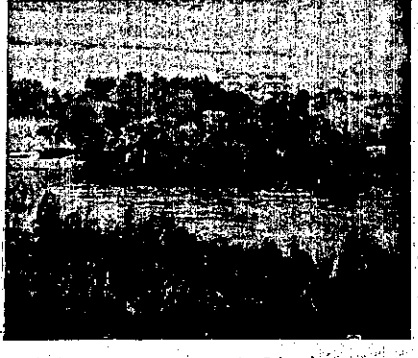
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