

sense and keen practical insight into business, had helped them in many a time of doubt and difficulty, and it was to be regretted that at a time when they should be organising their forces in view of the 1911 option polls, the trade associations generally were bereft of their counsels. He felt sure that their sympathies were with the sorrowing relatives and friends of these gentlemen, and he would ask them to approve of the letters of condolence already despatched, and those that were to be sent by the secretary to the relatives and friends of those who had joined the great majority, and whose loss they all mourned.

Mr Palmer then moved accordingly, the resolution being carried in silence, all standing.

It was decided to take action forthwith to organise the several branches of the trade, in view of the coming option polls, the secretary being instructed to address communications to kindred associations and organisations, and to arrange for a conference, if necessary, with representatives of the wholesale interests.

Labour troubles engaged the attention of the meeting for some time, and the president was empowered to interview the officials of the Labour Department, with the view of more clearly defining the position of retailers under the Shops and Offices Act, in regard to certain of their employees.

Other business of a routine character was transacted, and the proceedings adjourned.

TRADE TOPICS.

The Trade in Auckland has sustained another severe loss in the death of Mr John J. Russell, proprietor of the Star Hotel, Otahuhu, who was discovered dead in bed on Sunday morning by his son, Mr Percy Russell. Deceased was in good spirits the day before, and had attended a sale at Papatoitoti, retiring to rest at night without showing any symptoms of illness. When discovered in bed his feet were cold, but his body was still warm. Heart failure is ascribed as the cause of death. Until recently Mr Russell had lived in Onehunga, where he was long and favourably known, especially for his connection with Masonic and friendly societies. He held the position of secretary in Court Pride of Onehunga Foresters for six years, and was treasurer for three more, while for some years he acted as treasurer of Lodge Manukau, the Masonic Lodge at Onehunga. It is only a few weeks since Mr Russell's wife died suddenly, while his father and mother have each passed away during the last twelve months. The interment, which took place at Wai-karaka on Monday afternoon, was of a private nature. At the inquest (Mr A. Harris, Acting Coroner), the medical evidence was to the effect that the deceased had suffered from acute heart trouble, and the jury brought in a verdict in accordance with this testimony.

Mr Lamartine Dwan, of Dwan Bros., Hotelbrokers, Wellington, who has been on a visit of inspection to the East Coast, in connection with land properties, is at present in Auckland, still "on business bent."

"Ted" Donnelly, who has just sold his interests in the "New Zealander" Hotel, Wellington, to Mr McManus, late of the Central Hotel of the same city, is spending well-deserved holidays in Auckland.

Among the visitors who are staying at the British Hotel, are: E. Allen, Johnsonville; J. R. Bills, Otaki; D. Burn, Wakefield, Nelson; W. F. Butters, Warkworth; and S. Wadsworth, Talivera, delegates attending the biennial meeting of the Grand Lodge of Druids, at present being held in Auckland.

Mr G. McArthur, the proprietor of the Star Hotel, Tauranga, is at present in Auckland, and is staying at the British Hotel.

Mr A. E. Brunette, proprietor of the Grosvenor Hotel, Blenheim, arrived here last Sunday morning, in connection with the meeting of the Grand Lodge of Druids, which is expected to last till the end of the week.

Of the late Mr C. B. M. Branson, President of the Dunedin Licensed Victuallers' Association, and Vice-

president of the New Zealand Association, who (as stated last week), passed away on the morning of the 1st inst, our Christchurch correspondent writes:—Mr Branson was one of the most popular members of the Trade in the Dominion. A man of the most scrupulous honor and integrity, widely known and respected, he will be greatly missed. For about twelve years he was the proprietor of the hotel which bears his name in St. Andrew's street, Dunedin, and conducted the house in the most exemplary way. From being quite a minor hotel, "Branson's" has become, under its late proprietor's wise rule, well and favourably known to travellers, and a very valuable property. Mr Branson had a paralytic stroke on Xmas Eve, but the doctors held out great hopes of his recovery. He gradually sank, however, and the end came on the first of the month, as already announced. Mr Branson ("Charley Branson" as he was universally known), leaves a widow, two sons, and a daughter to mourn his decease, all of them well-known and highly esteemed. The Trade has sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Mr Branson.

Mr Victor Cornaga is evidently quite at home at Gleeson's Hotel, of which he took possession recently. Under his direction the old Hobson-street hostelry is proving more popular than ever. More power to Victor! May his shadow never grow less!

Mr F. C. Bass, late of the Northern Wairoa Hotel, Dargaville, is again in harness. After a short holiday spell he has taken over the management of the Prince Arthur Hotel, having purchased Mr T. B. O'Connor's interests in that well-known house of call. Mr Bass's many friends on the Northern Wairoa are certain to look him up on their periodical visits to town, and under its new management the Prince Arthur will compare more than favourably with the best hotels in town. We wish Mr Bass every success in his new venture.

Mr Agnew's many friends will regret to learn that he is again in a private hospital. He underwent an operation for appendicitis some few weeks ago, and had so far recovered as to get about again, when he caught cold, and, suffering a relapse, was ordered back to bed. He was on the eve of taking over the management of the Thames Hotel, during Mr Buxton's trip to the Home land. The delay that has thus occurred in the arrangements made for his taking the hotel over will, it is hoped, be of short duration only, the mischief being likely to be remedied by a few day's rest and careful treatment.

"I had not touched drink for six months, and the little I had overcame me," said a man at the Thames Police Court, London. But the rising sympathy of the court fell hurriedly when the assistant-gaoler explained. "He was only released that day, after six months' imprisonment."

A Westport message states that the police are appealing against the decision of the magistrate in dismissing the informations against Westport publicans for selling liquor on December 26. The appeal will be heard in the Supreme Court at Westport in March.

At the Auckland Magistrate's Court, Mr C. C. Kettle, S.M., gave judgment in a case in which the Auckland Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union (Mr C. E. Skelton) proceeded against G. Hyde (Mr Singer), licensee of the Star Hotel, for engaging a barmaid otherwise than through the secretary of the union. The facts in connection with this case were that Mr Hyde had made application to the secretary of the union on November 21 for a barmaid, but one was not supplied. Subsequently he telegraphed to Wellington, and secured a barmaid. His Worship said that in his opinion the defendant's action was justified, on the ground that the union did not supply his requirements within a reasonable time. The case was dismissed. His Worship said that he would consider the question of costs for the defendant.

The question of the legality of selling soft drinks on Sundays was brought under the notice of the Prime Minister on Saturday by a deputation representing the restaurant-keepers and others. It was stated that the police were now contending that under section 17 of the Police Offences Act, soft drinks could not be sold on

Sundays, even to customers who preferred them to tea or coffee. It was stated that over 100 prosecutions were pending, and that 24 summonses had already been issued: The police, it was stated, claimed that they had the power to close refreshment rooms altogether on Sundays, although barbers were allowed to work until nine o'clock on that day. Sir Joseph Ward replied that the Government could not interfere with the enforcement of the Act, and if any hardship existed the only remedy would be to amend the Act next session. He was in favour of soft drinks being obtainable on Sundays, but any movement towards the initiation of a system of general Sabbath trading should be

checked. He would, he added, make a statement on the subject after consulting the Crown law officers. The deputation was introduced by Mr Arthur M. Myers, M.P.

THE WORLD'S WINE CROP.

FRENCH AND GERMAN VINEYARDS.

OUTLOOK NOT TOO PROMISING.

Several reports from various wine growing districts have already appeared showing that the season of 1910 has been disastrous. Messrs. Gilbey's annual report has appeared and only confirms the most pessimis-

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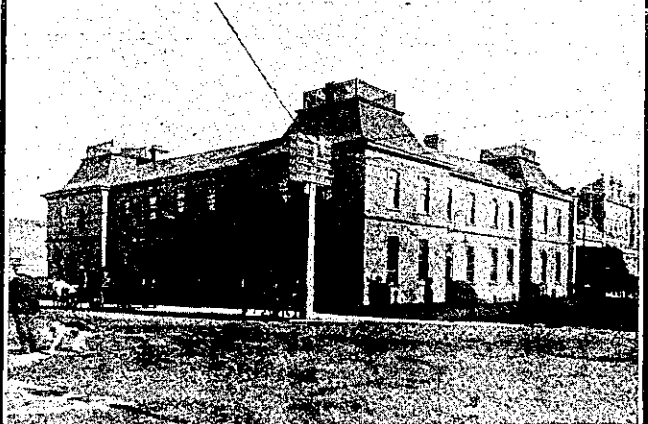
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