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MESSRS. ARTHUR CLEAVE AND COMPANY, LIMITED.

Proprietors N.Z. Sporting and Dramatic Review, Licensed Victuallers' Gazette.

Dear Sir,

At the Annual Meeting of the Licensed Victuallers' Association of New Zealand, held on the 19th October, 1910, a resolution was unanimously adopted constituting the Sporting and Dramatic Review, the official organ of the Association for the Dominion.

H. J. WILLIAMS,
Secretary N.Z. L.V. Association.
Wellington, October 20, 1910.

"BUSH BEER."

A CURIOUS PARALLEL.

RARATONGA NATIVES AND KING COUNTRY SETTLERS.

Reading Sir Robert Stout's report upon the charges made against the Administration at Raratonga, and more particularly the Chief Justice's remarks on the liquor question, the writer was reminded of the pregnant opinion, expressed by a contemporary writer, upon the futility of all attempts made to prohibit the use of stimulants. That opinion recently found expression in these columns, and, in view of recent developments, it deserves to be again placed on record, as embodying the thoughtful conclusions of a gentleman who has given years of study to the Temperance question, and whose work on "The Heresy of Teetotalism" contains more sound logic and common sense than any volume of "Temperance" literature that has yet come our way. Says Mr. Thorne, in the work referred to:—

"It would appear from the widespread use of stimulants in every part of the civilised world, and nearly in all other parts that so great is the desire which the Creator has implanted in human nature for something of the kind, that when laws are made which unduly prevent their enjoyment some other and far more dangerous system is certain to be resorted to. So hazardous is any attempt of well-meant, ill-directed fanaticism to improve on the divine plan."

AN INTERESTING PARALLEL.

The natives of Raratonga are placed in the same position as the residents of the King Country. They may not purchase liquor locally, and because they are debarred from doing so they make it for themselves. In the King Country, we are told beer is brewed for private consumption that is more "heady," and that contains more alcohol than the ordinary brewers' beer. We know beyond this that methylated spirits, doctored in such a fashion as to give the liquid the appearance and taste of whisky, has been, and is sold illicitly in the King Country, that testimony being forthcoming from No-license advocates themselves. And only the other day we had an admission from a Te Kuiti clergyman that No-license in the King Country had failed of its purpose, "its weakness" being "the facility with which, under it, liquor was procurable." Now turn to the Raratongan record, as disclosed by Sir Robert Stout, and see what pleasant (?) reading it makes. Says Sir Robert: "There is no doubt great trouble in the Islands through the manufacture, more than through the sale, of intoxicating liquors. . . . This manufacture of alcohol seems to be very prevalent in the bush districts, and also in some of the villages. . . . Efforts should be made to try and create public opinion amongst the natives against the use of alcohol. . . . I am

also of opinion that there will have to be more strenuous efforts made to put down what is termed 'bush-beer drinking,' and so on.

ILLICIT v. LICENSED TRAFFIC.

This "bush beer" is made by the natives from the juice of oranges and bananas, which is allowed to ferment and which generates alcohol very quickly, the natives gathering to drink it in the bush—hence its name. An attempt is made by the Chief Justice—himself a Prohibitionist—to show that this 'bush beer drinking' is due to the importation of alcoholic liquors into Raratonga and that it is this that is "causing the mischief." But against this seemingly plausible, but very misleading theory, it has to be pointed out that "bush beer" was made by the natives long before the European introduced alcoholic liquors into the Islands, and that it is far more difficult to control the manufacture of "bush beer" than it is to regulate the sale of alcoholic liquors made or imported in the legitimate way. The Chief Justice having opened the subject and set the ball rolling we are sure to hear a good deal from the Prohibitionists during the next few months, ament the heinous sin of the liquor seller, in introducing alcoholic liquors into Raratonga, and it is just as well, therefore, to emphasise the fact that the licensed trade of New Zealand is no more responsible for the Rarotongan use of "bush beer," than it is for the private manufacture of beer and the sale of methylated spirits disguised as whisky in the King Country. Both are the outcome of prohibition.

"AUTOMATIC NO-LICENSE."

THOSE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES AGAIN.

THE HANDICAPS IMPOSED ON HOTEL LICENSEES.

Some very unnecessary feeling appears to have been exhibited in the House of Representatives on Friday by a member who objected to the introduction of the licensing question into the debate initiated by the member for Waitaki upon the new electoral boundaries. Mr. A. M. Myers had incidentally referred to the fact that, in the readjustment of the boundaries, several licensed houses were being transferred to No-license districts with the result that the hotel-keepers in those districts have to secure a three-fifths restoration vote instead of a two-fifths vote for continuance. Thus, Ohinemuri absorbs Te Aroha, Wairongomai and Katikati, and, as a consequence, no less than six licensed houses are liable to be wiped out of existence in a manner that was clearly never contemplated by Parliament when the principle of Local Option was first conceded. It is only right that public attention should be directed towards this very unsatisfactory feature in the working out of the new electoral boundaries, and a full and free discussion should be welcomed on the subject. In previously dealing with the question we purposely refrained from commenting upon the unnecessary compulsion that is placed upon electors living in those portions of licensed districts that are automatically transferred to No-license areas. Against their wishes, in spite of their votes to the contrary, and utterly regardless of their rights as citizens, they are compelled to either win over the three-fifths No-license majority to their way of thinking, or else submit to the semi-prohibitive No-license regime. Nor does the injustice end there, because, by the transfer of their votes to the No-license area, the continuance vote in the remaining portion of the licensed district is considerably weakened. Tauranga, as stated, which voted Continuance in 1908, loses districts containing six hotels to Ohinemuri, and with these hotels and districts,

sacrifices a very considerable proportion of its Continuance vote, so much so, indeed, that it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the No-license vote in Tauranga may gain the day next November. Out of 5218 valid votes recorded in Tauranga at the Local Option polls in 1908, 2860 were cast for No-license and 2340 for Continuance. There was a strong Continuance vote polled at Te Aroha, Katikati and Wairongomai—the three districts now transferred to Ohinemuri, and placed under the three-fifths handicap—and that vote undoubtedly helped to save the situation so far as Tauranga was concerned. Now that vote is almost certain to be swamped by the No-license vote in Ohinemuri, which was nearly 17 per cent. greater in the Goldfields electorate than in Tauranga. On the other hand, the Tauranga Continuance vote was 13 per cent. more than the same vote in Ohinemuri. Te Aroha, Wairongomai and Katikati have nothing in common with Ohinemuri. Yet the residents of those districts, who supplied fifteen per cent. of the Tauranga Continuance vote, are placed at the mercy of the majority in the latter electorate, and compelled to secure a three-fifths vote in their favour, or go out of existence. The thing is so monstrously unjust as to savour of an outrage. And we are glad to find that all sections of the licensed trade are entering their protests against the injustice. These protests should be followed up by prompt and vigorous action, and, if Parliament refuses to give redress, the law courts should be appealed to, with the idea of having the matter thrashed out before the Privy Council. The position appears so unconstitutional, and the disability placed upon hotelkeepers is so contrary to the common law rights of British citizens in other parts of the Empire that we believe such an appeal could be prosecuted successfully.

TRADE TOPICS

The N.Z. Licensed Victuallers' Association, at a special meeting held in Wellington on Friday, unanimously adopted the following resolution:—
That this meeting most strongly protests against the effects of the action of the Boundary Commissioners, which virtually extinguishes a number of hotels without the voice and vote of the people having been taken, as provided in the licensing laws of the country."

It was pointed out at the meeting that the loss of hotels brought about through the alteration of boundaries might be far greater than the results of the general licensing poll, and each recurring period for boundary adjustments would increase the possibilities of the inclusion of licensed houses within No-license areas. The loss on the present occasion would be at least nine licenses, if restoration was not carried at the next poll.

A new scale of fees under the Licensing Act of 1908 will come into force on September 1. In the old list of fees there were some uncertainties. The old scale was gazetted under the Act of 1881, and as there have been many Licensing Act changes since then, revision was necessary. Things have arisen under the licensing changes for which there was no provision in the scale. The alterations are described as "really revisions to make for clarity"; and it is said that the officers should experience less uncertainty in the matter of precisely what fee to levy.

The Egmont Hotel, Hawera, narrowly escaped destruction by fire on Thursday morning, an outbreak only being suppressed after damage to the extent of £350 had been done. The amount is covered by insurance in the Phoenix and Sun offices.

The publication of the results of the deliberations of the Representation Commissioners respecting the adjustment of the electoral boundaries brings once more into prominence the injustice of the present law in its application to hotel licenses. Even the strongest amongst the advocates of no-license must, if they are fair-minded men and women, recognise that there is a strong element of hardship in the automatic abolition of licenses through the arbitrary changes that are made in the boundaries of electoral districts. The principle of the licensing law is that licenses may be abolished if a certain substantial proportion of the electors in the district in which those licenses have been granted so decree by their votes at special polls taken for the purpose. What proportion of electors should be required to express an opinion in favour of the abolition of licenses in a district in order that their judgment may become effective may be an arguable point. But there is neither principle nor justice in an arrangement whereby, as the outcome of a readjustment of electoral boundaries without any reference to the licensing question, the holders of licenses that have been granted in virtue of the popular vote forfeit these simply because the locality to which they belong has been assigned to a district that has previously registered an effective decision in favour of no-license.—"Otago Daily Times."

Speaking to an interviewer in Wellington with regard to the alteration of boundaries, Mr. A. M. Myers, the member for Auckland East, pointed out that in nearly all cases where parts of license districts have been added to no-license ones, the population in the no-license area is greater than that in the licensed portion transferred, with the result that the hotels included will have to face a three-fifths vote for restoration, instead of a two-fifths one for continuance, and it can be readily understood that the trade is voicing a strong protest. The Ohinemuri district has absorbed Te Aroha, Wairongomai, and Katikati, where there are no less than six licensed houses, three of which are owned by the licensees. Where, asks Mr. Myers, can the community of interest be between Te Aroha, a typical tourist resort, and Waihi, which is entirely a mining town?

An extension of the Wellington Suburbs seat up the west coast to Plumpton will result in two hotels—one at Pahautanui and the other at Porirua—being included in a no-license area. Their licenses will disappear next time unless the Suburbs seat alters its attitude on the question. It is stated that the Grosvenor Hotel and Star and Garter Hotel, which were included in the establishments closed by no-license being carried in Wellington South, are now in Wellington Central, but there is no statutory machinery by which their licenses can come again into operation.

The big changes consequent on Taieri's disappearance result in two hotels going out of the old Tuapeka electorate into Oamaru, which is a no-license area. The Mataura no-license electorate has "wet" boundaries, but it has not extended them, and no hotels will be affected.

Bruce now embraces Beaumont and Waipori, and hotels at both places will be closed. The Clutha boundaries will not affect any hotels, but the encroachment of Oamaru into what was formerly Tuapeka will close two hotels at McRae's and, it is believed, a third to the south.

"Civis," whose "Passing Notes" are a feature of the Saturday's issue of the "Otago Daily Times," discourses thus pleasantly upon the "No-License" Convention recently held at Balclutha:—"Writing to the 'Daily Times' the other week a visitor from the North Island described the village of Balclutha as 'a cemetery.' That was un-