

sell you either a drink or a flask." There have been periods when the law has been strictly enforced, but experience shows that at such times "enforcement doubles the number of kitchen bar-rooms. Liquor traffic goes into the homes of the poor; women sell to men because kitchen bars are in the home, and the woman of the house being always there it naturally becomes her charge; children become little agents, young men become pocket peddlers of poisonous splits (the 'split' is a mixture of bad alcohol—sometimes wood alcohol—water, a dash of rum and some colouring matter. It results in blind, crazy drunkenness. The stricter the enforcement the poorer the liquor, and the larger the proportion of whisky over beer. The demoralising effect of this illicit traffic may be gauged from the following: "During one year and four months of enforced prohibition, the principal of the Centre-street Public School estimated that one thousand school children of Portland were engaged in the traffic as peddlers, announcers, lighthouses and look outs." All sorts of expedients are adopted to avoid detection. In one instance liquor was kept in a disused sewer; in other instances the hiding places would be woodsheds, the cellar, between the mattresses of beds, between the ticks in a cradle and so on. In one house a secret bar "ran spring water with one turn of the faucet, but on the opposite turn it ran whisky which came from the attic through a lead pipe in the partition. Another house had in its cellar an apparently blank wall. But if you lifted an innocent rock the spring gave, the wall thrust out into the cellar, and behind the wall a case of whisky was nooked. In the ground floor of another house you will discover a trap-door, just large enough for a child to be let down into the cellar to pass up the bottles." And these statements, it must be remembered, are made by the writer of an article who argues that "Prohibition has made cleaner, better cities," and who confidently expected that it would be retained in the constitution by the electors.

DEMORALISED CHILD LIFE.

The children of the very poor are those who suffer most from and by this illicit trading. In the kitchen bar-room "the stuff is peddled out in dirty glasses to other families in the same tenement, to labouring men on their way to and from work and to fellows with their girls. This means that the children of the family who sell and the children of the other families in the tenement are made agents in the traffic. The children peddle it out to passers-by, direct them into the rear room, pick up the empty bottles and watch for deputies. In times of strict enforcement, children on the alert for the deputies, pass the word down Centre Street, 'Blow, blow,' which means the raiders are coming. In Portland one saloon employs several 'lighthouse' boys to flash a warning. Their wages run from eight to fifteen dollars a week, and the keenest of them receives eighteen dollars. But mostly the children do the job for fun." And Mr. Gleeson makes this significant comment on the business: "A direct prohibitory law, partially nullified, drives the local retail liquor trade into vile hands. The secrecy, the illicit sales, all the unholy accompaniments of breaking the law continuously attract the lowest grade of liquor sellers. Such men favour prohibition because a high license, if a law were passed licensing saloons, would cost them good money, and since most of them have criminal records they might be unable to obtain a license!" With facts such as these before them, is it any wonder that the majority of the people of Maine have come round to accept the fact that a properly regulated and effectively supervised trade would largely remove the evils with which Maine is seen to be afflicted! The moral for ourselves is obvious.

The story of an ingenious theft from a public-house was told at Birmingham police court, when Geoffrey Gamble was charged with having stolen a sovereign. Three sovereigns had been placed on a ledge at the back of the bar. The prisoner came in for a drink, and having been served, was observed by the landlord reaching for the money with a long bamboo cane. To the end of the cane was fixed a small tin filled with soap. One of the sovereigns was missing, and was discovered in the prisoner's pocket. The prisoner was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

TRADE TOPICS.

After all Te Aroha is not to be included in the Ohinemuri electorate; neither is Katikati. Both have been restored to Tauranga, and so the four hotels there are considered fairly safe. But the fifth hotel finds itself dependent upon the vote of the Waihi miners for its continued existence, although it has nothing in common with Waihi, nor is there the least community of interest between the two places. The hotel in question is, unfortunately, by no means singular, hotels at Porirua and Pahautanui having been transferred from Otaki to an adjacent "dry" district, as a result of the redistribution of boundaries.

As the result of negotiations with Sir George Reid (High Commissioner for Australia) the Customs authorities have agreed to issue certificates as to the age of whisky exported to the Commonwealth.

The travelling public of the Dominion coming to Christchurch are naturally struck with the splendid way in which their wants are catered for. There are in Christchurch hotels and hote's. The "Oxford" has no pretension to style, but it has to comfort, cheerfulness, cleanliness, cuisine, and sparkling ales, wines and spirits. Mr Cohen has had considerable experience in hotel management, so that patrons can be assured of entire satisfaction in every department at the "Oxford." Situated opposite Victoria Park, and close to the Colombo, St. Bridge, the distance to the General Post Office, theatres, and business centres is but three minutes' walk. Trams pass the door and stop on either side of the hotel. Altogether the "Oxford" is an ideal place to stay at.

Writes a Paeroa correspondent:—"It seems rather an anomaly to have a prohibition order issued against a resident of a no-license district, but at the Police Court at Paeroa application was made against a resident of Karangahake. Constable Montgomery said the man had to the constable's knowledge consumed thirty bottles of whisky within the last two months in addition to what he had obtained locally. The order was issued."

The West Australian Alliance has recommended its members to support the Labour candidates because the Government declines to amend the Licensing Act.

Mr H. Goodwin, late of Cambridge Hotel, has taken over the Clarendon Hotel, Manners-street, Wellington.

"Has the no-license vote done away with the practice of centuries—that of 'shouting'?" asked Mr Inder with some warmth during the hearing of a no-license prosecution at Gore.

It is stated, says the Thames paper, that the miners of Waihi are anxious that restoration should be carried in the Ohinemuri district, and, with this end in view, are considering a scheme whereby, in the event of restoration, they are to have a direct interest, not only in the management, but in the profits of licensed houses. It is understood that if arrangements can be made with the owners of former licensed premises and with the wholesalers interested, it is the intention of the miners to take active and keen participation in the forthcoming local option poll. The rumour in question was mentioned to Mr Myers and the member for Auckland East, who is in a good position to speak with some authority on the point, confirmed the report. In discussing the situation, Mr Myers agreed that this movement at Waihi had within it the germ of a great and radical change in the system of the control of licensed houses. "It has yet to be seen how such a system as that proposed in Waihi will work," he said. "But, in view of the large population of the Ohinemuri district, it is to be presumed in the event of restoration being carried on these lines that the profits that accrue as a result of the miners' interest in the houses will result in the augmentation of such funds as the sick and accident fund by large accretions from this source, and what is from the public point of view, I suppose, of greater importance," added Mr Myers, "it will probably be the forerunner of a desire on the part of the people to experiment with the question of municipal or State ownership of hotels. That is undoubtedly the tendency of the present movement at Waihi."




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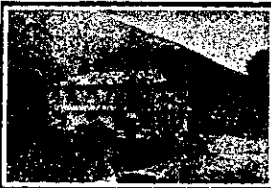
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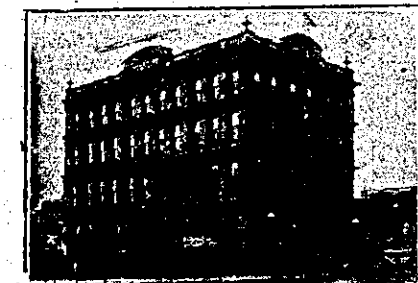
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