

DRY AREAS IN SCOTLAND.

A PAPER READ AT A MEETING OF WANGANUI EAST UNION.

Madam, President and Sisters,—

The cumulative experience of the dry areas in Scotland is overwhelmingly in favour of No-license. The facts and testimonials from official and accredited sources are absolute and convincing. There are 310 parishes in Scotland in which there are No-License houses by the will of the Landlord.

The Temperance (Scotland) Act of 1920 placed power of Local veto into the hands of the Ratepayers, and the dry areas now number 345. Before that date, the landlords only had the power.

The Areas which were made dry by the will of the Landlord are unassailed by the liquor interest for two good reasons.

The Landlord introduced a prohibitory Clause in the Land tenures against licensed premises, which binds the owners and occupier for all time. It is also an undoubted fact that no representation has been made to the Landlords by the residents of those Areas to repeal the prohibitory enactment. The Areas which have become dry since 1920 are in a different category.

A fresh poll may be taken every three years. The liquor interest therefore direct their resources financial and otherwise, to overthrow the verdict of the "Dry Areas," and win them back to wet conditions. A constant stream of misrepresentations is poured forth. The liquor traffickers fear the object lesson of the dry Areas.

They also fear the Temperance (Scotland) Act, which gives the people their lawful rights to protect the home and the community. They declare the Act to be a failure. One fact alone proves its success, and gives the reason for the deadly hatred of the local veto principle contained in the Act.

The Act was passed in 1913, but a time limit of seven years was given in lieu of compensation. The liquor sellers thereupon started a Mutual Insurance Scheme to compensate dispossessed License holders.

In 1920, 381 licenses were swept away by the first exercise of the power of the Electorate. It cost the Mutual Insurance Company £257,

752 13s. 5d. In 1923 further limitation cost them £26,850.

Three years working of the Act meant an inroad into the Mutual Insurance fund of £284,602. The intense dislike of the liquor traffic to the Temperance (Scotland) Act is shown in the fresh endeavour they are making in conjunction with false temperance reformers to suspend the operations of the Act for a period of eleven years, to secure compensation for the license holders, and to introduce improved public-houses and disinterested management, which are really camouflaged methods of entrenching the liquor business.

The remarkable and conclusive results of the dry Areas are the best answer to opponents of No-License. There is a note of joy in all reports.

In the Southern District of Scotland, the Burgh of Stewarton adopted a No-License Resolution in 1920, and after a determined attempt by the liquor interest to recapture the town for drink, reaffirmed the No-License Resolution in 1923. It is a town of about 3000 inhabitants, largely dependant on Hosiery manufacture. As a result of No-License: 1st.—The Burg taxes have been reduced 7d. per £; 2nd.—Arrests for drunkenness which totalled 43 in three wet years were only 15 in three dry years; 3rd.—Co-operative sales have increased by £6,000 per annum.

In the Midlands, Kilsyth, a mining centre with a population of 8,000, and Kirkintulloch an industrial area with a population of 12,000 became dry in 1920. The resources of the liquor traffic, not of Scotland only, but of the whole country, were concentrated on those towns—but they achieved a magnificent victory again in 1923.

Kirkintulloch.—The milk consumption goes up and infant mortality goes down. The taxes go down and Savings Bank deposits go up. The rates were reduced 18s. on every £11 rental. The Savings Bank deposits increased £13,000 in two years of No-License. A Municipal Savings Bank was also inaugurated when the town went dry, and £17,393 have been deposited.

A profitable kind of employment. Owing to more orderly community, the Town Council were applying for a reduction of the Police force by 25 per cent.

The foregoing are just examples of the great advantages that have come to dry areas through the closing of public-houses.

Cambuslang, one of the largest parishes in Scotland, with a population of 26,000, should not be forgotten, which has turned public-houses into banks, cleared the streets of drunken men and foul language, transformed hovels into homes.

Women and children first: That should be our main consideration. In the glorious victory won in the Whiteinch Ward of Glasgow, a populous Shipyard Centre, on December 2nd, 1924, a striking impression was made by a large procession of children on Saturday afternoon before the poll, who carried on their banners the appeal, "Vote No-License for me, Daddy." That constitutes an irresistible appeal. To all lovers of children I would say this, that it would be good to have a new generation of children growing up in more wholesome surroundings, who have never seen a public-house or drinking bar. I will now give you an outline of the work done by the B.W.T.A., namely the British Women's Temperance Association or Scottish Christian Union, of which I was a member.

Our Association was formed at Newcastle in 1876. From that point the Association grew, both extensively in new branches all over Scotland, and intensively in specialised forms of work, and through it and round it all the spirit of loyalty to, and service for Christ. That spirit is animating those to-day who are striving to build on the foundations so well and truly laid fifty years ago.

New lines of work were made necessary by the changed circumstances which arose after 1913. The passing of the Temperance (Scotland) Act, focussed the work towards 1920, the date on which the local veto Clauses became operative.

Members of the Association in their various branches had to share in the work of educating the electorate up to the point of voting. Then in 1918 came the Representation of the Peoples Act, giving votes to women. This completely changed the situation and increased the urgency of the B.W. work in every area that polled in 1920, and since then B.W. has