

Candid Comments

By Citizen

A newspaper which carried an editorial, "How to counter the rot of Juvenile Delinquency" had just below it, a second editorial, "Liquor Laws—Reform Overdue", the so-called reforms being mainly, more facilities for dispensing liquor. We have only to read our newspapers to see to what extent liquor is involved in juvenile hooliganism. Juvenile delinquency is deliberately fostered by adult delinquency. Glorification of gangsterism in films, radio serials and comics, undue emphasis on sex, the sale of liquor to those under age, the sale of contraceptives to young people, all of these are the work of adults. It is time adults faced up to their responsibility. Of such adults our Lord said, "It would be better if a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea". Now, if our Lord was so filled with indignation as to use these strong words, it just shows that apathetic church people should bestir themselves to follow His example.

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In Australia it looks as though even coffee bars are not safe for teenagers. In Melbourne some coffee bars have been raided as part of a police campaign for under the counter sales of undiluted liquor to teenagers, the liquor grappa, being nearly 90 per cent pure alcohol.

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The Wellington Secretary of the National Society of Alcoholism addressing Rotarians, appealed to them not to force liquor on their guests when they acted as hosts, for in doing so they might prepare the way for a potential alcoholic in their own home. This is an excellent answer to those who would make liquor readily available.

Mr J. Newman, President of the Travel and Holiday Association, has said that our licensing laws should be altered for the benefit of tourists. Mr T. J. Young, Assistant Superintendent of the N.Z. Alliance, managed to get a good reply into a Wellington newspaper, pointing out that a prominent liquor trader had said recently that, while tourists wanted a high standard of accommodation, he was concerned that they **did not drink liquors**. Many tourists are thrifty people who prefer to keep their money for seeing the sights and many stay at private hotels as they prefer the quieter atmosphere. One newspaper editorial said it was an affront to both commonsense and gracious living that liquor should not be served in restaurants worthy of the name, as it is overseas. But the reply to this is that many people lose their commonsense and become singularly ungracious after taking liquor, and medical opinion is that the smallest amount can affect motorists when they drive.

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A determined attempt is being made by liquor interests to obtain liquor in restaurants and also in dance halls. This is being supported by newspaper articles and editorials, while it is known that some editors have refused letters that would give the other side of the story. It is surprising to read the comment of an Auckland Magistrate, who said that he would assess a penalty on a restaurant

proprietor, who had broken this law, as less than would otherwise be imposed, for he considered that the offences were caused largely by public demand. Other business people do not benefit by this reasoning and the question arises, "Who creates public demand?" The blame can be placed fairly and squarely on the liquor sellers, who deliberately break the law and then say the public want it broken. Availability and advertising have a responsible part in creating a desire for liquor.

A SURVEY OF TOURISM THE OVERSEAS' VISITOR

The number of overseas visitors has risen from 16,500 in 1951, to 38,000 in 1957—the latest year for which I have figures. In spite then, of all the inadequacies of our allegedly totally unsuitable facilities, there has been a steady rise in numbers. Though the number of persons has more than doubled, the income derived from their coming here has only just doubled. In 1931 the amount earned was (that is the amount spent) £1,343,000, and in 1957 it was £2,774,000.

Suppose We Lost All Of It

And all that was spent by the tourist was actually profit, then regarding the population of New Zealand as two and a half millions, then each man, woman and child would be the poorer by about twenty-two shillings annually, or more simply, about 5d. per week, or 5/7th of a penny per day.

Who Came?

Business men, preachers, teachers, children, white, yellow, and men of all colours. Were they all drinkers I wonder, and I very much doubt it?

Australians 15,749, Americans 4,253, Oceanians 3,141, Britain 2,909, Africa 396, Others 1,541.

Loudly spoken critics denounce our way of life, perhaps fifty of the 38,000! We could improve our way of life without doubt, but it must be obvious to all who have these figures that, on the whole, the overseas visitor is not trying to indict our way of life, but that the Trade has seized upon one or two remarks from disgruntled persons and is seeking to make capital from these.

If We Lost The American Tourist

Every one of them, it would cost us all less than three shillings annually. Surely a negligible amount, and since many Americans who come here, in fact very many of them are representatives of Religious Bodies, most of whom* are non-drinkers, and therefore, part at least of the American trade would persist if there were no drink at all.

But apart from all these considerations, the money which is spent is not all profit by any means—take, for example, those who do spend money on drink. Whisky and nearly all the spirits are imported here first of all and so far from being an asset, these tourists are a liability, also, unless tourists purchase only goods and services which are manufactured solely in this land, then whatever they spend has no value at all from the viewpoint of the balancing of our budget. There is only one conclusion from this, and that is, there is collusion and manipulation somewhere.

—(Contributed by request.)