

# The "No-License" Movement

## Part 2

Mr. L. M. Isitt was invited by the British Temperance workers to tour England. He, with Mr. T. E. Taylor, had become the greatest Temperance speakers in New Zealand and his British tour was an inspiring one. His addresses brought down upon himself and the Party abuse and criticism from their opponents. On one occasion at Durham, he was challenged to appear before a united audience, composed of both sections, to answer certain challenging remarks and questions. As his itinerary was booked up for four months ahead, the best he could do was to book up a date at the conclusion of this period. The date duly arrived and the great building, the largest in Durham, and capable of holding 6,000, was filled to the doors, the Mayor presiding.

For twenty minutes L. M. Isitt fought with that audience for a hearing, until at last a drunken man fell in the aisle. Mr. Isitt snatched his opportunity and ascertained from the Chairman that he was the proprietor of the "Rising Sun." Pointing to the fallen man he said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Rising Sun has fallen," and in the laughter that followed he got away with his address and had a successful meeting.

He returned to New Zealand in due course, having been released by the Methodist Conference to continue with Temperance work, to help on the great Campaign.

About this time, Mr. Atkinson, of Dunedin, wrote an instructive pamphlet on the evils of the Liquor Traffic and this had wide circulation.

The small paper, the "Prohibitionist," commencing with very meagre dimensions, had grown in size and distribution, and supplied a running account of the doings of the Trade and of the No-License Campaign.

During a large part of the Campaign and for months before an election, the Tuam Street Hall in Christchurch was taken every Sunday evening at 8.15 p.m., when addresses were given by the leading speakers of the Prohibition Party. It was a common thing to see leaders of the License Party there in force, and they often were given a welcome in person by L. M. Isitt and T. E. Taylor. I have often heard, "We are glad to see Capt. Kiddey, Capt. Marciel, Mr. Myers and Mr. Cawlishaw in our audience tonight." I might also add that when Captain Kiddey was dying, he sent for Rev. L. M. Isitt, telling him that he was dying and wanting to know the Truth. This indeed was a very great compliment from a leading opponent, proving the respect in which he was held.

Obtaining suitable halls for meetings gave the No License Party considerable difficulty, for the License Party would book up all halls for months in advance. On one such occasion, the

Skating Rink was the only place not booked and this was taken and all available seats and chairs were hired for seating about 5,000 people and the balance of the audience stood and listened to Messrs. T. E. Taylor, L. M. Isitt, F. N. Isitt, P. Munro, C. Porter, C. H. Laws, and G. J. Smith. I was present at this meeting and many others of similar size.

Mr. T. E. Taylor's speeches in the House of Representatives created a similar impression to these meetings, for when he took the floor, newspapers ceased to rustle and notebooks were all in operation to verify every word he uttered. On one occasion Mr. Taylor had just become seated after one of his able addresses in the House, when the Member for Avon followed and stated that "the House knew Mr. Taylor to be a crank." Mr. Speaker interjected, "The member for Avon must withdraw that remark." Mr. Taylor rose immediately and corrected the Speaker, stating, "There is no need for the Member to withdraw that remark, a Crank is a means of transmitting power," and the House was convulsed with laughter.

The death of this great leader in 1911, in the middle of his career, was a tremendous blow to the whole Temperance Movement. He was Mayor of Christchurch at the time of his death, and friend and foe alike attended his funeral, one of the largest ever witnessed in this country.

Mr. Taylor's devoted wife was Dominion President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union—a responsible position which she held with distinction and credit until failing health closed this avenue of service.

Mr. L. M. Isitt, after many years of service in Parliament, gained a seat in the Legislative Council, which he held until his demise.

Mr. G. J. Smith held similar responsible positions in both Houses until his death.

Such mighty men of leadership and zeal as these and numerous others, gave themselves to the cause of Temperance.

The fight continues and men and women of courage and enthusiasm are required to replace the leaders of those earlier years. We must have, as in the past, progressive No-License Leagues in every locality of any size, so that no opportunity is missed to attack this great enemy to progress and morality.

H. C. CHRISTIAN.

Cambridge.

"Through the long experience of my father and grandfather, extending over 100 years, I have reached the conviction that no other cause has brought about so much suffering, so much disease and misery, as the use of intoxicating beverages."

—DARWIN.

## DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

(Reports unpublished will appear in December)

### Hawke's Bay

Delegates from Napier, Hastings, Waipukurau, Dannevirke, Gisborne and Wairoa were present at the Convention held in Wairoa on September 26th and 27th.

The Rev. Caldwell led the opening devotions. Delegates and Mrs. F. Grigg, the guest speaker, were welcomed by Mrs. Hauhton, Wairoa President.

Encouraging reports were given by the delegates. A five minutes' talk was given by a member from each Union and these were inspiring and uplifting. Superintendents presented reports of steady work. During the afternoons, Mrs. Grigg spoke of her trip overseas.

A well-attended social evening was held when Mrs. Grigg, who received a floral tribute, again spoke of experiences on her trip.

In appreciation of services rendered over a period of years, Miss Ennor and Mrs. Lewis were presented with a cup, saucer and plate.

Items were given by the Wairoa Ladies' Choir, under Miss V. Edser's leadership.

The sessions the next day included "Plans of Work," and a question box.

It was decided to hold a fully representative Executive meeting in Napier next March.

A discussion took place on the recent film, "The Secrets of Life," and a decision made to protest against the sale of the booklets accompanying the picture. Though intended for adults, it was reported that children in their early teens were able to procure them at the theatres.

Temperance Hotels and Temperance booths at local A. and P. Shows were discussed. The desirability of an alternative drink, preferably fruit drink or soft drink being offered at public and private functions was considered.

One new member initiated.

**Election of Officers:** President, Mrs. Lewis; Secretary, Miss L. Ennor; Treasurer, Mrs. Brocklehurst.

An invitation to hold the next Convention at Dannevirke was gratefully accepted.

Votes of thanks for the excellency of all arrangements were passed to the Wairoa Union, and it was felt that the 1950 Convention had been one of the best held in the Hawke's Bay District.

### Manawatu

The Convention was held in Palmerston North on October 3rd, with delegates present from Feilding, Pahiatua, Levin and Palmerston North. Miss Jamieson led the opening devotions.

Reports revealed faithful work. Discussions took place on Children in Hotel Bars, Selling of Raffle Tickets by Children, and Licensing Committees.

Mrs. Stewart, of Feilding, led the

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