

way or the other — according to the country or licencing district. London, which contains several borough licencing committees, has many anomalies which are quite absurd.

For instance, the closing hour on the north side of Oxford street, a densely populated area is 10 pm, while the public houses on the other side of the road remain open until 11 pm. It is also possible to visit in the same district big restaurants which are both cheap and popular, and obtain drink until midnight — provided a meal or even a mere sandwich is purchased at the same time. Certain clubs have a drink licence until 2 am and membership of such clubs can be obtained and the licence law satisfied by the formal payment of 2/6. Moreover, for the benefit of the workers, the big early morning markets, such as Smithfield, Covent Garden and Billingsgate, open their local hotels from five o'clock until nine o'clock.

Thus there exists a hodge-podge of licencing regulations which sometimes give rise to abuses, but the Englishman is never confronted with the « clock drinking » problem.

Sunday hours are slightly different, namely, 12 noon until 2 pm and from 7 pm until 10 pm. This is common throughout the country. Legally, a traveller can demand refreshment from a publican, out of regulation hours, provided it can be proved that he

has journeyed three miles. Not many people, however, exercise this right which is, perhaps, just as well.

Canada has rather stringent regulations. Bars and saloons are numerous, but the individual has to possess a special permit to purchase liquor for consumption off licenced premises. In common with most colonial hotels apart from Great Britain, little or no attempt is made to provide anything but the bare drinking facilities. English public houses,

particularly those owned by the big breweries, make a special point of providing comfort and amusement, this tending to raise drinking above the level of mere « swilling. »

America is in a peculiar situation regarding liquor laws. Each state makes its own regulations and in

some cases the saloons are open continuously day and night. In general, the Americans adopt the attitude that liquor is there to be sold; it is a profitable source of revenue to the country and they can see no point in restricting the consumption of alcohol any more than they would suppress the functioning of restaurants.

As far as New Zealand is concerned, a general overhaul of the licencing laws is obviously long overdue. It is axiomatic that repression of an evil only emphasises it.

