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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII, Pope

Current Topics

New Efforts at Temperance Reform.

A new scheme of temperance reform—new, that is, to this country—has been recently propounded in Dunedin and has been already promised a certain measure of influential practical support. The scheme was first mooted by Colonel Morris in the columns of a Dunedin religious periodical and has since been warmly backed by Bishop Nevill and several other Church of England clergymen and by the *Otago Daily Times*. Briefly put, the proposal is that there should be formed in Dunedin a Public House Trust or Company, which should begin by buying one of the best hotels, and should reform and elevate the traffic by running the hotel 'on business and Christian lines.' The company is not to pay a greater dividend than 5 per cent., and any surplus profits are to go towards the establishment of a fund for the purpose of buying up more hotels. In an interview with a representative of the *Daily Times*, Colonel Morris thus explains the details of his proposal and the advantages that are expected to accompany it:

'Such company to have a capital sufficient to purchase one of the leading hotels in a good thoroughfare, under the management of a strong board of directors—business men—who will appoint a manager and bar tenders, all experienced in the trade, who shall be paid liberal salaries. It is self-evident that such employees, having no self-interest in the sale of the liquor, would not press the sale of intoxicants on the public, nor would they have any inducement to sell liquor to those already partially intoxicated, nor to young people under age, nor would it benefit them to break the laws by selling on unlawful days or hours. The board of directors would also form such other bye-laws as may seem necessary, and a breach of the law, whether public or bye law, would bring about the instant dismissal of the manager. At the same time beer, wine, and spirits of the best description would be kept on the premises for such who demand it, whilst temperance drinks would also be kept, and, if thought desirable, a commission might be allowed to the manager on the sale of such, whilst not a penny of commission would be allowed on the sale of intoxicants. Tea and coffee rooms, to which ladies might go, might be added, with, perhaps, billiard and recreation rooms, so as to make the house as attractive as possible. From the experience of such houses at Home, there can be no doubt that it would pay well, especially if watched by a board of good business men. In that case, it is proposed that after paying the shareholders a really good dividend (5 per cent.) the balance of the profit should be placed in a sinking fund, until there are sufficient funds to purchase in like manner a second hotel to be worked in the same manner.'

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According to Colonel Morris these Public House Companies are a great success in England and Scotland, though we imagine it would be nearer the truth to say that the system is still only on its trial in these countries and is being subjected to serious criticism. However that may be, we do not believe that the scheme, which differs in essential respects from the Public House Trusts in England, will ever come to anything in

this country. In the first place people will not be likely to put their money, to any considerable extent, in an investment which cannot yield a greater return than 5 per cent. and which may give them a great deal less. In the second place the scheme can have no chance of achieving complete success unless the company takes over the whole of the hotels in the town. What is the use of having a hotel with male bar-tenders and with provision for limiting the supply to patrons when on the other side of the street there is another drinking place where an attractive barmaid is employed and where there are none of the hampering restrictions that handicap the 'Trust' establishment. The most probable outcome of the operation of the company system would be that the private hotels in order to hold their own would be compelled to continually add to their 'attractions' with the result that the last state of the traffic might be worse than the first. As the company hotels gained a footing and were patronised by the highly respectable and moderate people the other hotels would be constrained, by force of circumstances, to cater for the less scrupulous class of customers so that as the company hotels prospered the others would almost inevitably tend to deteriorate. Moreover even if the company hotels did meet with considerable success the success would be a doubtful benefit for in spite of the best intentions and the most careful efforts they would form after all to a very large extent a recruiting ground for, and a sort of respectable half-way house to, the less reputable places.

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Although Colonel Morris's scheme is not, as we think, likely to meet with any real success, a proposal of the kind, coming from professed anti-Prohibitionists is interesting and significant as showing that practically all classes in the community are agreed that drunkenness is a great evil, and that some effort should be made to check its growth. In this connection a modest but by no means to-be-despised movement has just been started in the Irish diocese of Ferns which is worth noting, and, as we think, is also worth imitating. The movement has been inaugurated under the name of St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League. 'The League has been placed under the patronage of the Irish National Apostle,' says the *Catholic Times*, 'because it rests on the double foundation of religion and patriotism. The primary object is to combat one special and very grave abuse, treating in public houses, which is held to be the chief cause of drunkenness in Ireland.' A member promises not to take a treat from another, nor to give one himself in any place where drink is sold. He also promises to lead a temperate life and to discourage intemperance in others. There is nothing absurd, puritanical, or fanatical about that pledge. No one can deny that the fatal habit of intemperance is more often than not acquired through the habit of drinking for pleasure when one meets an acquaintance or joins a party, and if people could be induced to give up this custom a great stride would have been taken towards promoting general temperance and sobriety. The Anti-Treating League has been organised for the purpose of striking a blow at this custom, and there is reason to hope that in time it will strike a very telling blow. In case any of our readers may wish to take a practical interest in the movement we may mention that certificates and promoters' cards may be obtained from the printers, Messrs. O'Brien and Ards, Great Britain street, Dublin. The movement was started by a committee of priests, but the

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY.