

### SIX O'CLOCK CLOSING.

The Citizens' meeting, convened by His Worship the Mayor of Wellington for Thursday evening, June 7th, in the Town Hall, was a great success. The large hall was practically full, the only unoccupied seats being most of the chorus seats and a few seats under the gallery. It was an enthusiastic meeting, and even if there were not many new points brought forward, the solid arguments for drastic reform were logically presented and strongly stressed. As was to be expected, National Efficiency and Economy in War Time was the text on which all the speakers based their addresses. The Mayor, as on similar previous occasions, emphasised the fact that he supported the proposed reform in the interests of the whole community and all communities through the Dominion, and not on behalf of only one special section or class, whether soldier or civilian. The point of greatest interest raised by Dr. Newman, who moved the principal resolution, demanding the restriction of the sale of strong drinks to the hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., was the serious position of things in the Home Land. Having recently returned from a visit there, he was in a position to speak, and he reiterated again and again the statement that we out here have no idea how serious is the condition of England. Because New Zealand is still fairly prosperous, in some ways remarkably so, we are living, many of us, in a fools' paradise, and after the war is over we shall begin to feel the pinch, and therefore it behoves us to husband our resources, instead of dissipating them in unnecessary luxuries. It is pleasing to know from an eyewitness that as the result of the work of the Board of Control, matters are greatly improved in various large areas. One rejoices over the 33,000 hotels closed, the large areas practically gone dry; the restricted sale of alcohol through the shortened hours—in the controlled area only 2½ hours per day—the consequent decrease in drunkenness and crime; and we would fain believe that the Doctor is right in thinking Sir J. Ward and Mr Massey will come back convinced that it is time we in New Zealand set our house in order, and will be prepared to introduce, without delay, the legislation that ought to have been put on the statute book nearly three years ago.

Mr John Hutcheson's breezy oratory and plain common-sense appeal to the public, especially because it is all based on his own experience, whether in his earlier life as a sailor, or in recent times as member of the War Relief Committee. He knows, because he has tried it, that a cup of coffee or tea is more effective than a rum ration in restoring warmth and vigour to a man who is exhausted through strenuous labour and exposure to cold and hardship. To him it is incredible that three or four hours' a day loss to the Trade should be put beside the loss of son or brother or husband, that hundreds and thousands are being called on to suffer. The whole thing wants to be throttled for the sake of efficiency—no miserable anti-shouting regulation, simply ignored and ridiculed all along the line! He is looking to the time when the "old brigade" will have to turn out to replace the young men that have gone, and he for one wants to be fit.

Mr Morrison, K.C., supported the resolution as a moderate drinker, therefore free from total bias, but he would go further. The clubs must shut up as well, and the members of some at least were quite ready for it. The bottle trade must be absolutely stopped, and no one must be allowed to purchase liquor at all who cannot produce a clean police certificate of character. Somehow or other liquor must be prevented from reaching the "dens of iniquity," that are far worse than hotel bars. All this sounds well—especially from a moderate drinker—but has anyone ever known the "Trade" abide by regulations intended to keep it within bounds? In Mr Morrison's opinion the whole matter is entirely one of profit and loss, and the brewers should help the hotel-keepers with the heavy rent they complain about, so equalising the loss, which, after all, is trifling compared with the loss of life at the Front. One other of his statements may be noted, that "the measure of the nation's worth is the measure of its capacity for voluntary action." Alas for New Zealand, seeing the compulsion that has been found necessary on every hand!

The remaining speakers brought forward no striking points beyond those we are already familiar with from such publications as Arthur Mee's "Defeat?" and the pamphlet "Man-power," both of which were

frequently referred to and quoted from. But there was a healthy tone and atmosphere in the whole meeting, spite of occasional slight attempts at interruption. The audience was at first disinclined to listen to the returned soldier, who was allowed at the close to give his reasons for opposing the resolution. So far as they could be followed, these were on the usual lines, liberty of the subject and so forth. Apparently he thought to make a point by relating how in Egypt the authorities had found it necessary to establish wet canteens in order that the soldiers might have no pretext for going to Cairo. To this the reply at once suggests itself that they chose what seemed to them the lesser evil, but it hardly touches the main argument as to wet and dry canteens.

It goes without saying that in such a large gathering—mainly Prohibitionist in character—the resolutions—the first demanding 6 o'clock closing, the second directing a deputation to lay the wish of the meeting before Cabinet—were carried with enthusiasm. It remains to be seen how far the temper and attitude of Cabinet and Parliament have been affected by the experience of another year of war, and in the case of many the opportunity of seeing the progress of events and the exigencies of the case from the Empire-point-of-view on the actual scene of action.

### WANTED!

**A Woman!** Just a saint, understand,  
And a womanly woman, who on every  
hand  
Sheds the lustre of purity, goodness,  
and grace,  
Who carries her loveliness stamped on  
her face;  
Whose wisdom's intuitive, insight is  
deep;  
Who's poised in her little world's  
centre, and who  
Is gentle, responsive, and tender and  
true;  
Whose sweetness and graciousness fit  
like a gown.  
Do you think I might find such a one  
in the town?

We are losing 110,000 children every year before their first birthday. The year 1915 would go down to history as the blackest year in modern records, for then we lost 90,000 men by land and sea. But every year 60,000 men are victims of tuberculosis, alcohol and its consequences.—Dr. Saleeby.