

WOMEN'S
Christian Temperance Union
Of New Zealand.

Organised 1885.

"For God and Home and Humanity."

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EFFICIENCY.

"Deliberate, then dare," said a celebrated military general. The members of the Efficiency Board acted on this principle in relation to the liquor traffic. They deliberated concerning the forces that make for victory and the forces that tend to defeat. In the course of their deliberation they found that one of the greatest "road-hogs" standing in the path of speedy victory is the traffic in alcohol.

In other words, they discovered that the greatest bar to progress is the Liquor Bar. Judging not as moralists, but as business men, whose watchword was efficiency, they discovered the truth of Lloyd George's words, "We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Strong Drink, and the greatest of these is Strong Drink." Having arrived at such a conclusion as the result of their investigations,

they acted on the knowledge they had ease, they ventured to prescribe the gained. Having "deliberated," they "dared." Having diagnosed the disremedy; and the prescription was a drastic one. It was less a prescription, indeed, than an operation. What they said in effect concerning the Liquor Trade was, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Thus saying, they dared greatly. Judging neither as prohibitionists nor moralists, they yet in a trice outdistanced the most thorough-going prohibitionist and introduced an act of morality that was novel in the extreme. In recommending the abolition of liquor so far as the importation, manufacture, and sale of it in the Dominion as beverages are concerned, they startled the whole of the liquor traffickers and a large majority of the liquor drinkers. In recommending that monetary recompense should be paid to the liquor traders, they startled the majority of the people called Prohibitionists:

Liquor-sellers and liquor-lovers knew indeed that a large percentage of New Zealanders desired the destruction of the traffic in strong drink. The Trade had experienced, it is true, triennial frights, but having heard the cry of "wolf" for so long, it had thought that all was well with it. The Efficiency Board's suggestion of absolute prohibition came as a rude awakening. Likewise the Prohibitionists had settled down to the thought that compensation was as dead as the dodo. Had they not proclaimed the same from the housetops? The Trade had received many years' warning that it must eventually quit. Some of the traders up and down the land had in time past been compelled to relinquish their licenses through the operation of the reduction vote. The traders in the 12 No-License areas had likewise been dispossessed of their legal right to sell liquor. Had not the survival of the luckiest provided enough for them in the way of compensation? Yet there, in the Efficiency Board's report was the recommendation that reasonable compensation, not to exceed 4½ million pounds, should be paid. To many thorough-going opponents of the Trade it was unthinkable that a penny should be given in the way of compensation. It was only after grave deliberation that the New Zealand Alliance dared to support the Efficiency Board's recommendations. This decision is being

endorsed by scores of thousands in New Zealand, who are signing the Alliance petition, which asks for an early poll on the liquor question along the lines laid down in the Efficiency Board's report.

But there are some who refuse to sign because compensation is recommended. These may be divided into two classes: (1) Those who consider their pockets, and (2) those who object to compensation on principle. For the first—those who hesitate because they fear extra taxation—we have nothing but contempt. At a time when our soldiers are freely pouring out their life-blood to save us from Prussianism, it is degrading in the lowest degree for any man or woman to raise the cry of, "Oh! my ducats!" Such a person should be "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

But our respect goes out to those who hesitate to support the petition on the score of principle. We have a great deal of sympathy with those who say, "What compensation did our sons get when they had to give up their farms, their homes, and their lives? If the country is allowed to conscript manhood, why cannot it conscript a trade that is injurious to the community?"

On the other hand, we must remember that the law of the land (despite strenuous opposition in many quarters) gave the trade 4½ years to "demobilise." Recognising the pernicious effects of the traffic in strong drink, the Efficiency Board said in effect: "Pay a money compensation in lieu of time compensation, which the law allows, and get rid of the traffic immediately."

When we remember that the present drink bill is 4½ millions, and that the indirect cost of the traffic is something like 10 millions; when we think of the lives that will be saved if the 4½ years of the traffic is destroyed, who will hesitate to pay as a ransom a sum that is less by a quarter of a million than the annual direct expenditure on strong drink, and less by at least five millions than the indirect expenditure on that which blights and destroys? Let every person say, "Set down my name, Sir."

Wife: "Don't you think I should have a vote?"

Husband: "I dunno, Jane. You'd probably want a new hat to wear at the polls."—"Denver Republican."