

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

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"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

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The White Ribbon.

"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

WELLINGTON, APRIL 1, 1947.

LICENSING COMMISSION'S
RECOMMENDATIONS
WHY WE OBJECT

Mrs. Hiett States Our Position

Address given during Convention.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union is opposed to the Liquor Traffic because it is non-Christian, it is contrary to all that makes for a Christian nation. As disciples of the Master Who went about doing good, rescuing the fallen, healing all manner of diseases, protecting the weak, and guiding the unwary from the pitfalls of sin, we must take up arms against this enemy of Christ. We are living not only for the present, we are living for the future. Every little life is our concern; therefore we oppose the liquor traffic for what it does to children. One case, which could be repeated many times, is that of three neglected children whose father and mother were constant drinkers. The magistrate, in sentencing them said, "You both drank your money away, and let your children grow up in an extremely neglected condition, and in such a fashion as no father or mother with any decent instinct, or any love for their children would do." One child had two abscesses on her head and one on her neck. Another had sores all over his body. The baby had died of neglect. These children and all such are our concern, and yet the Royal Commission

recommends to our Members of Parliament retrograde changes, although acknowledging that drink "has dangerous possibilities."

The changes recommended will make drinking easier, more widespread, through which more children will be hurt.

The report itself appears to be a wholesale condemnation of the liquor traffic, and yet amazing conclusions contained in its recommendations are quite incomprehensible. There are suggestions with which we agree, viz. restrictions on liquor advertising, greater authority for Licensing Committees, and especially for temperance education in the schools, but how the Commission in the face of its own findings recommends making drink still more dangerous to the community is difficult to understand.

As an organization of women who stand for the moral and spiritual welfare of every man, woman and child, and who realise that every life is our concern, we strongly oppose many of the changes in the licensing system recommended by the Royal Commission.

The recommendation to increase the hours of sale by a period from 8 to 10 p.m. on five nights of the week means that our streets will be unsafe for young girls and women because of the drunken men turned out of the bars. It means that more little children will be neglected. Since six o'clock closing, our streets have been comparatively free from the objectionable conduct of drunken men. Is it not an absurd suggestion that longer drinking hours could lead to less drinking?

We oppose the sale of liquor in restaurants, R.S.A. clubs and other clubs (even in no-license areas), and in dance halls. The Commission seems desirous of making drinking respectable. Friendly bars, nicer accommodation, and various other plans for encouraging young people to drink, are suggested.

Drink in restaurants would be most objectionable to a large number of diners and would increase the facilities for drinking among young people who do not enter public bars. Beer in R.S.A. and other clubs constitutes a dangerous bait to keep drink before youth in the places where they congregate, and drink at dances, at present illegal, is particularly objectionable. It has been a problem for the police for years. They know the degradation it brings about. We therefore emphatically protest against

wider scope being given for the consumption of beverage alcohol in restaurants, clubs and dance halls; and if such were introduced it would be against the express wish of our people, which would be intolerable in a democratic country.

The Commission recommends redistribution of licenses. We believe this would be a retrograde step, tending to increase facilities for drinking, and would bring this dangerous business into suburban areas which have long been free from the drink menace. Redundant licenses, such as those in existence in old mining towns, should be cancelled and no new licenses should be given to residential areas unless the people living in those areas apply for them.

Then the Commission proposes to extend the time between licensing polls to nine years. We are totally opposed to this. The triennial poll helps to prevent excessive violations of the law, owing to the possibility of prohibition being carried. The liquor trade is too dangerous, to go unchecked for so long a period. It would give scope for greater violations of the law than are even now taking place. The Commission, apparently satisfied that the beer now made is satisfactory, yet suggests that its strength should be increased by 1%. We oppose this, as men get drunk on beer as it is. Increasing the strength is only a concession to trade demands, and only means increasing drunkenness.

The recommendations for public ownership of breweries, and for the furtherance of Trust Control will achieve no practical reform. Alcohol is a poison with dangerous possibilities, and whether sold by State or publican has the same evil results.

Trust Control has not decreased drinking in Invercargill, and has nothing to recommend it in the way of modifying or eliminating drunkenness. We definitely oppose these recommendations.

In 1884, a solemn pact was made with the Maori chiefs that liquor should never be sold in the King Country. We solemnly protest against the breaking of that solemn pact. Having regard to the disastrous physical and moral effects of liquor among the Native races, we urge that the petition of the Maori Elders should be honoured, viz. "(1) It is a sacred historic covenant that has proved of great value to our people. (2) It is a great and sorely-needed pro-

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