

in the number of licenses then existing. It is admitted on all sides that the "local-option" clauses of the Act of 1881 have not had the effect anticipated, and it is in contemplation to introduce a Bill during the ensuing session of Parliament to enable a direct issue to be placed before the people and to be decided by them.

5. In most districts in the colony licenses are obtained with comparative ease, and illicit sales are chiefly confined to those localities where population has been temporarily attracted by the construction of new works, or in remote settlements where no licensed houses exist.

6. Special clauses provide for the regulation of the sale of liquor in Native districts, by which power is given to the Governor in Council to define districts called "Native Licensing Districts," within which it is unlawful for any person to sell, supply, or give any intoxicating liquor to any person of the Native race. Provision is also made for the election by the Natives in such districts of one of their number as an Assessor, who is, by virtue of his office as Assessor, a member of every European Licensing Committee for the ordinary licensing districts included within the boundaries of the Native district, and whose consent is indispensable to the granting of any license within such district. There are several of these Native districts in the colony, but experience goes to show that the Natives take very little interest in the matter, and considerable difficulty has been found in carrying out the election of Assessors, and in inducing them to attend the meetings of the Licensing Committees when elected.

7. A special provision is made by section 25 of the Act of 1881 whereby the Governor is empowered, on the application of the owners of any block of Native land on which no license has hitherto been granted, to declare by Proclamation that no license shall be granted within such block. This section has been taken advantage of in two cases.

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

I have, &c.,

ONSLOW.

No. 50.

(No. 25.)

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 23rd May, 1890.

With further reference to your Lordship's circular despatch of 12th March last, and in continuation of the information contained in my Despatch No. 24, of 17th instant, which, in accordance with your wishes, I sent without delay by last mail, I have the honour to enclose a copy of a table published in "The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1888," by the Government Statistician, from which you will see that the consumption of intoxicants in New Zealand per head of the population is the smallest of the Australasian Colonies, with the exception of Tasmania, and but little more than half the consumption per head in Great Britain.

I also enclose a copy of a table published with the statistics of this colony for 1888, showing the consumption of alcoholic liquors per head of the population (1) excluding the Maoris, (2) including the Maoris. These tables show a steady annual decrease in the eight years under review. There is an apparent increase of the amount of spirits consumed in 1888, which is accounted for by the fact that, in November, 1888, in anticipation of an increase in the Customs duty, 82,759 gallons were cleared. It is estimated that the actual consumption of spirits, after allowing for these clearances, would amount in 1888 to only 0.680 per head of the population (excluding Maoris), as against 0.770 as shown in 1887.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

ONSLOW.