

are upon this subject. We embodied them in certain clauses of the Bill of last year, but we found there were difficulties, not political, but of a material character in the way of carrying our opinions any further. We find it bad enough to be obliged to devote a session to Ireland and a session to Scotland, and, if in addition we are to devote two or three sessions to publichouses, there really would be a very serious impediment to public business. The vigour of the controversy which rages on this subject makes it very difficult to introduce any legislation at all. The noble earl spoke rather as if he imagines that handing over the licences from the Magistrates to the local authorities would be a measure in derogation of the liberty of which he is very justly jealous. That is not my opinion. I think that the views to which he is particularly adverse only exist in particular *strata* of society; they do not spread very largely, but they are found in persons who announce them with great vigour and propagate them with great skill. Those views have found a place in some counties on the magisterial bench. But I am not sure that the liberty of which he is the champion will not in the long run be exposed to this kind of risk if the present system of magisterial licensing continues without any modification. At all events, I feel we should, on the whole, be quite as safe with the County Councils as with the Magistrates in this matter, though I entirely concur that such measures should be taken, in any legislation on this subject, as should prevent any oppressive action of the kind which he dreads. But there is one point in the reasoning which struck me as he went on, and to which I will draw his attention. I quite admit there is this desire for what is called prohibition. It is nothing new. It has existed in communities from time to time. One of the earliest heresies that afflicted the Christian Church was a heresy which forbade to drink wine, or to eat flesh, or to marry. In these days we separate the three, and there are three separate sects who preach these various doctrines. They are illusions which prevail from time to time; they grow, they flourish, they reach their height, and then they fall away. And I think from some of the statistics which he has brought forward there is ground for believing that we are not in great danger of this feeling spreading very much further than it has already spread. But it is mixed up with another feeling, with which, I think, my noble friend has wrongly confounded it, but which is defensible, and that is the movement for shutting publichouses on Sunday. Now, that is not, in my view of it, mainly a teetotal one. It is much more analagous to what we may call, without offence, the Sabbatarian view—which turns much more on the sanctity which attaches to Sunday than on the movement for restraining the sale of spirituous liquors, and therefore it has at its back a much stronger force of opinion—a force of opinion drawn from the sentiments and the deep convictions of a large school of the Christian Church, and I do not deny that that movement has acquired considerable strength, and may acquire greater strength yet. My noble friend must not imagine I am at all in its favour; I deprecate it very much; but I was anxious to distinguish between two different currents of opinion which I think it is a mistake to confound. I think the movement for Sunday closing is one of considerable power, and I do not venture to prophesy how far it will succeed or how far it will fail. We know it has already succeeded in the Celtic portions of this country, and it may extend somewhat further; but the movement against the liberty to consume alcohol, which is separate from the question of Sunday altogether, is not, in my belief, a very powerful movement, and I think my noble friend need be under no apprehension that it will ever be powerful enough to interfere with individual liberty. I quite agree it is important we should watch these movements and obtain as much information as we can, and we shall be glad to give our assistance to my noble friend in doing so.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY suggested that information should likewise be obtained from Australia and New Zealand.

The Marquis of SALISBURY.—That shall be done.

No. 23.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 20th August, 1889.

With reference to the Earl of Carnarvon's circular despatch of the 3rd September, 1875, I have the honour to acquaint you that it has been decided that "The Superannuation Act, 1859," does not allow of a pension being granted thereunder in any circumstances whatever to an officer of the Civil Service retiring from public employment under the age of sixty years, except on the ground of ill-health or of abolition of office.

Officers who have been transferred from the Imperial Civil Service to the Civil Service of a colony in which the pensionable age is less than sixty years should therefore be given to understand that, on their retirement from colonial service, the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury will not be able to award them pensions in respect of their Imperial service under the Act of 1859, if that retirement takes place under sixty years of age, unless it be for one of the two reasons above mentioned.

I have, &c.,

KNUTSFORD.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.