'TIS UNSPEAKABLE

That "Corkage" Business Soon to Be Started.

One Seeking an Explanation of the Matter Bumps Up Against!. "Teg Tuo I Nac Llet Uoy Gnihton."

(Special to News and Observer.)

Greensboro, N. C., May 4.—The new city mayor and board of aldermen take charge of the city government Friday night, and from what was gathered by this representative yesterday they will have to begin right away Saturday morning, good and early, testing the prohibitiveness of the prohibition law. A report that Mr. Tom West contemplated opening up a "corkage" business in the city caused Mr. West to be looked up to see what new form of business enterprise it was, and how much a corkage business would add to the already wondrous variety and extent of the commercial activities of the city.

Mr. West was very courteous and accommodating, explaining what a corkage business was like. He piloted the correspondent over to the east room of the building on Sycamore street, formerly occupied as West's saloon. The room had been fitted up with a large number of lockers about big enough to hold a forty-five pound baby or a five gallon jug. Each locker has a key. Mr. West is going to rent these lockers to any party desiring them, the renter keeping the key and keeping anything desired in the locker. Mr. West will be on the premises all the time, and will have a soda fountain for the dispensing of soft drinks. There will be a large refrigerator, of course. Parties renting the lockers might desire to keep bottles of whiskey or beer in them, the whiskey and beer being previously bought by them in a distant State and shipped in here under the inter-State commerce law. The party having this private whiskey might come in and be hot, needing ice, or a cork screw or both. Mr. West will for a small stipulated sum supply the ice and he will pull the cork out of the bottle for his tenant, and there is where the "business gets the name of "corkage," and if there is no impediment to it, it will surely be a corking good business in Greensboro these dry times.

Asked if he didn't think the Law and Order League would get after him, Mr. West said he had no idea of violating any law or he would not embark in the business; that he had thought it might be opposed by prohibition sentiment and he had consulted some of the best lawyers in the State, and was told it was all right, as he only rented lockers and waited on customers, furnishing them nothing but ice or pulling corks for them. He said he would open up business Saturday morning and would treat everybody right, especially at his soft drink and soda fountain, where the best fruit syrups and all the latest soft liquid allurements would be dispensed.

After seeing Mr. West and going through his establishment, the press representative sought interviews on the subject with the city authorities who have been pretty steep on the prohibition law since it went into effect. Mayor Osborn would say nothing until the correspondent was taken into the presence of City Attorney Scales. When Mr. Scales was found in his office in the Southern Loan and Trust Company building, the mayor used the following language, or gave out the following interview: "Mr. Scales, I told you that when I went out of office there would be the devil to pay, and right here now when I stop Friday night, here comes Tom West, Saturday morning opening up a corkage business."

After the novel nature of the business was explained to the faithful city attorney and attorney for the Law and Order League, he said: "I have not investigated the question sufficient to state wherein it violates the law, but there will be no doubt found means to prevent its nullifying the effects of prohibitive legislation." Mr. Scales said he did not care to be quoted further, as he never crossed a bridge until he came to it.

A lawyer having no official connection with the city government, said that it was a novel proposition, but he had no idea the business would be permitted. He said the city charter provided that any one who gave another a bottle of whiskey should be considered prima facie the seller, but he admitted that if the proprietor swore the bottle was the individual property of the locker tenant, it would rebut the prima facie presumption. He said though that the board of aldermen could pass a law making a prohibitive tax on certain classes of business, and in this way stop the carrying on of any business that had been officially declared a nuisance. When asked if a man were to buy a glass of soda water and himself dash it with a nip of whiskey out of his own pocket flask, it could be declared a nuisance, the lawyer admitted that this question might prove a corker to some judges and even some aldermen.

Determined to get something definite from some one of the officials, Alderman-elect Leon Brandt was interviewed as to what views he entertained on the subject, as he will have to pass on it officially. He was extremely reticent. He was pleaded with to outline his policy and would only say: "If somebody would open up a business here that would cork up some people I know and some newspaper reporters I do not know, it will never be interfered with by the board of aldermen."

Mayor-elect Thomas J. Murphy, when asked for his construction of the law in the premises and his probable course in the matter should it come up before him for trial, most obligingly and promptly replied: etoaﾠ,.(¾..:; ? (!'-).'-).' inshrdlua etaoﾠinshrdlucmfwyp ﾠﾠﾠ