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Bellows Falls Times

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1903.

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As a business proposition which would you rather do, run a saloon in Bellows Falls and pay a license fee of \$750 or one in North Walpole and pay \$300?

The Vergennes Enterprise thinks Vermont has become thoroughly Cainized. It says: "Vermont has ceased to be the guardian of the tippler; he must take care of himself and keep sober. Otherwise he pays the piper."

They are counting the drinks up in Burlington. Licensed saloons were opened May 1 and it is reported that during the first day a single saloon on Church street made 1115 sales, and yet there can be no abnormal thirst in Burlington for all the world knows that there has always been saloons enough there.

The saloon interests in Keene have a shrewd way of doing things according to the Keene Sentinel which says: "All the saloons and clubs rooms in the city were closed up tight Saturday morning for an indefinite period, as a result, apparently, of an understanding arrived at by the proprietors. It is said that the object is to make the town so 'dry' that all who wish for beer or other liquors will vote for license May 12." Keene will never be able to weather a two weeks' dry spell.

There has been a noticeable increase of arrests for drunkenness in Montpelier since licensed barrooms were opened. This increase is explained by the Argus in this way: "Under the new law, when a man gets drunk in Montpelier he is arrested without waiting for him to make a disturbance. Under the old law if a man could get along the streets without causing trouble he was not molested and it was the usual custom to send a drunk man home if possible instead of arresting him. The increase of arrests is due to changed policy. There has been no notable increase in the amount of drunkenness."

One reads of peculiar things in connection with labor troubles. Striking hack drivers in New Haven, Conn., last week caused trouble for a funeral procession. This was what the news dispatches said: "Striking hack drivers interfered with a funeral and caused the procession of carriages to stop several times on Grand avenue, on the way from St. Patrick's church to the cemetery. Four of the carriages in the line were driven by non-union men, while the other hacks were driven by union men, whose employers have signed the working schedule demanded by the union. The people in the non-union carriages, among whom were two members of labor organizations, refused at first to comply with the strikers' demand that they enter other carriages, but after repeated stoppages of the line of carriages and a threat on the part of the union drivers not to continue if the non-union drivers remained in the line, the occupants of the non-union hacks got into other carriages." Even the dead have their troubles, and if strife continues the corpse may have to walk to the grave.

New Hampshire people are just beginning to realize what manner of license law they are living under. The Keene Sentinel brushes the cobwebs from its glasses to remark: "There has been an impression, evidently without good foundation, that in a license town or city the state license commissioners could limit the number of licenses, could say who should and who should not take out licenses, and could select the locations for saloons. There was therefore some surprise at the announcement that the license commissioners will rule that they have no right to limit the number of licenses in a town or city, and that anyone will receive a license who asks for it and who fulfills the condition of the law. The license fees for saloons under the new law are: In Keene, \$400; in Walpole, \$300; in all other towns in

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Cheshire county, \$200. Nor will the commissioners have anything to say about the location of a saloon so long as it is not in the districts forbidden by law. If a town votes for license May 12 it will be a wide open license community. On the other hand, if a town votes for no license it will be a restricted license community, for even then licenses will be issued to hotels, drug stores, hardware stores and depot restaurants for certain restricted purposes. The question is therefore between restricted and wide open license.

Board of Trade Meeting Tonight.

The semi-annual meeting of the Board of Trade will be held in Banquet hall this evening. There will be a free lunch and smoke talk and all members are urged to be present as an important question is coming up for decision. The question will be the adoption or the rejection of the proposition of a remedied depot as submitted by the railroad centering at Bellows Falls. This proposition was given in full in last week's issue of this paper. If the Board of Trade votes to accept the proposition the depot as outlined would probably be remodeled during the coming year. If the proposition is turned down the only hope of the community depends on what the railroad directors may decree after a full hearing. This depot question is one that vitally affects the community and deserves and will no doubt get careful consideration at the hands of the Board of Trade.

A New City Hall.

A special corporation meeting has been called for next Monday evening. The report of the committee on a new building to be located on the present site of engine hall will be heard and action taken there on. We understand that this committee has plans and estimates based on an expenditure of about \$15,000.

If the report of the committee is favorable and the plans seem feasible, we believe that the village ought to vote to erect the new building this summer. The growth of any village the size of Bellows Falls is slow, and old and unsightly buildings remain much too long. Municipal progress, like progress of any other kind is made a step at a time, and it seems the proper time now to take another step in advance by tearing down the old, unsightly, inadequate building which has served for a jail and engine hall for many years, and erecting in its place a new city hall which will

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contain a modern jail and ample accommodations for the different branches of village government. At any rate there ought to be a large attendance Monday evening and careful discussion.

The Vapors of a Crank.

No great movement like that of trade unionism can long escape the crank and his crank ideas. Of course the crank and his ideas in no way effect the merits of the movement, but they often tend to put it in a ridiculous and false light. We notice in a recent issue of a trade paper that "Herbert N. Casson, founder of the first labor church in the United States, recently took the verse found in Matthew 2:10, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake' for the subject of remarks." So we already have a labor church. The old church that Christ established is not good enough. But what did Brother Casson talk about? After showing that his text cannot apply to the Christian church he continues, according to the report:

"Who, then, is doing the fighting? Who is being persecuted in these days 'for righteousness sake'? What class of people is being abused in the daily papers and persecuted by the injunctions of the courts, and imprisoned without cause by the officers of the law? Is it not the trade unionists? Are not they the ones who are seeking to establish righteousness, or rightness, in the business world of today? And are they not enduring the greater part of the opposition from those who are seeking millions out of the injustices of the present industrial system? Very few people are aware of the extent to which the trade unionists are being persecuted by the trusts and the machinery of the courts. We care if a few scores of workmen more or less are in jail, or if a few thousand more or less are in the depths of poverty? If Senator Hoar were to be gagged by an injunction and threatened with imprisonment if he disregarded it, because he had denounced the atrocities that have been committed in the Philippines, there would be an earthquake of indignation that would shake the country. If Lyman Abbott had been ejected from his home when he declared that every workman should be a member of a union, he would be lauded as a martyr to the truth and his friends would at once erect for him a \$50,000 house. But when a body of working people suffer for the cause of justice, no one pays much attention to them. They are only a body in jail. What do a few hunger pains more or less matter to every man who has been all his life on the danger line of poverty?"

So it is not much to say that trade unionism can lay claim to the blessing pronounced by Christ on all who suffer for the right. My opinion is that Saint Peter will give a back seat in the next world to every man who cannot show a paid-up union card.

Poor old Saint Peter! We fear Brother Casson has mapped out a course of action that will require more than an eight-hour day.

The Local Drink Situation.

The advocates of license have strenuously insisted that the adoption of license laws in Vermont and New Hampshire would reduce both drunkenness and the amount of liquors consumed. They insisted more strenuously before the laws were adopted than they have since. Let us examine the probabilities here in Bellows Falls for a moment.

On the Vermont side there will be five or six licensed places doing business with a feverish impatience to wipe out the license fee and the cost of the barroom furnishings in order to begin piling up profits; and as many unlicensed places as can escape the vigilance of the commissioners and the police. A citizen in a position to know all the facts says that up to two years ago comparatively little liquor was sold in Bellows Falls over bars, and that during the past two years a large percent of what has been sold has been beer. Does any sane, thinking man believe for a moment that under the new conditions a lesser amount of liquors will be consumed than under former conditions? Whether drunkenness and intemperance will increase remains to be seen. Of course we shall always have with us the man who makes a hog of himself, and so far as he is concerned it makes no difference what kind of a law is on the statute books. Will the ranks of the confirmed drunkard be swelled by recruits from the great body of citizens who are neither total abstainers nor guzzlers? That is a vital question. In other words will the men of the community be as temperate in their drink habits when open bars stocked with all kinds of liquors are easy of access as when obtaining liquors was attended with inconvenience and discomfort?

And how about the situation across the river in Walpole? Some have thought that the number of drinking places there under license would be lessened, perhaps from six to ten to two. Not so. Anyone in New Hampshire who has the price can secure a license, and some citizens of North Walpole expect that the number of saloons will increase rather than diminish.

The Manchester, N. H., Mirror recently contained an editorial which was supposed to be inspired, in-as-much as Mr. Little, the chairman of the New Hampshire commission is engaged to be married to Editor Putney's daughter. Here is one thing that the editorial said:

There was so much talk during the pendency of the license law about the autocratic powers it conferred upon the state commissioners that the idea that they were to say how many licenses were to be granted and who should have them became so firmly embedded in some people's minds that it is difficult to get it out, but there is nothing in the law as we read it to warrant any such belief. If the law means what it says the commission is obliged to issue a license, for a city or town that votes for license, to

any man over 21 years of age who has not been convicted of a felony, if he applies for one, pays the legal fee and furnishes a suitable bond. The board may say to him, "You must not locate your saloon in a place where it will be a nuisance or detrimental to the public good," but if it says this he may go into license territory and establish himself. In short the commission cannot fix the number of licenses, cannot determine who shall have them and cannot establish the locations. Its power along this line stops when it decides in what part of a license city or town there shall be no saloons.

One thing can be set down as certain—there is to be a marked increase in the consumption of liquors in this community, and in addition Bellows Falls will be the supply center for a thirty no-license territory extending several miles in all directions. The police and the commissioners will earn their salaries, and if the village votes to build a new city hall it might be well to provide for an extra cell or two in the cooler department, not to accommodate local parties, but boozers from surrounding towns who are sure to float in and tarry too long over their cups.

After all the only temperance worthy of the name is the temperance of the individual. We are told that out of the heart are the issues of life. The man who is temperate because he has always been kept in a glass bottle and from contact with temptation is not made of stern enough stuff to develop the best citizen ship.

Strict Enforcement of the New Law.

The increased number of arrests for drunkenness in the various towns in Vermont in which the new license law has become operative and saloons opened, is explained by the friends of the law on the ground that the officers are more strict in making arrests than formerly. It is urged that there is no more drunkenness than heretofore. Every law-abiding citizen hopes that this is true. But time will tell. The new law is on its best behavior now. If people have noticed any increased drunkenness thus far, the future certainly looks dark.

As to whether officers are more prompt in arresting drunks under the present law than under prohibition, the people will judge. Certainly if conditions are as satisfactory, if the community is as sober, if arrests or necessity of arrests are as few, as under the former law, no one will have cause to complain. It has been noteworthy in the past that a high standard of conduct has prevailed in most Vermont towns. In Rutland a man would not be tolerated on the streets or in public places for a moment in a condition that would not be given any attention in the border towns of New York where the officers and people are hardened or oblivious to drunkenness, so common is it.

So we say that if the standard of conduct in the past is strictly maintained, if arrests for drunkenness are no more frequent, if disorderliness is no greater than heretofore, the people will have some patience with the new law; otherwise they will not. But this should be marked: Under the present law the standard of conduct has not been raised; nor will it be. It is most ridiculous to claim so. The most that can be hoped for is that there will be no retrogression.

On this phase of the operation of the new law the Bare Telegram, a thick-and-thin advocate of license, says: "The increased number of arrests in those towns that already have licensed saloons sounds bad for the new law, but it is rather a matter of congratulation that the 'new regime' has more vigilant authorities and they are bound to show the world that it does not pay for a man to get drunk under any kind of a law. The rigid enforcement of the law in Montpelier is serving as a good warning to those who are wont to believe they can stow away the booze faster than the manufacturers can supply it."

"It is to be expected that there are many rowdies in Vermont who thought the local option law was passed for the special purpose of granting them a license to get gloriously drunk whenever they so desire. It will naturally take several weeks to bring this class of men 'down to earth' and educate them to the true condition, but it must be done under stern discipline in causing the arrest of every man who is found intoxicated. There should be no subterfuge about the new law. Let it stand upon its own merits. If we shield any of its bad features from the public gaze, the evils will thrive and multiply until we have a more disgusting system than we had before. Maintain an honest management and public opinion of its own accord will crush out the evils. Nothing will be gained by hesitancy in arresting a drunken man on the ground that his arrest will cast discredit upon the license law."

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