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ASPECTS OF PROHIBITION AND DRUNKENNESS

IN WANGANUI, 1880 to 1920.

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts
in History at
Massey University

Andrew Keith Burt.

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ABERVIATIONS

AJHR.	<u>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.</u>
NZS.	<u>The Statutes of New Zealand.</u>
WC.	<u>The Wanganui Chronicle.</u>
WH.	<u>The Wanganui Herald.</u>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

By the 1880's and early 1890's a number of social problems were demanding increased public attention throughout New Zealand. Problems such as larricism, disease, labour disputes, drunkenness and the whole question of Chinese immigration and immigrants, were but a few among many being raised both through newspapers and Parliament. A gap between aspiration and reality seemed to be making itself apparent. Also the feeling that New Zealand would be immune from such concerns, that had plagued England, was rapidly being exposed as false. Moreover the passage of time was making it apparent that they were not merely transitory problems, associated with the initial settlement of the country, but were in fact growing with the society. Increasing urbanisation also heightened this public awareness by making these problems more apparent. Yet despite this realization and appraisal there seemed to be little accurate investigation of the problems at the national level. This was in spite of the fact that some degree of knowledge of the areas of concern was possessed at the local level, for example, the prevalence of drunkenness and Chinese immigration and immigrants on the west coast of the South Island. As a result, broad generalizations concerning the problems at the national level were made and readily accepted by many New Zealanders.

A recent thesis, by P.F. McKimney, which examines in part the general problem and patterns of drunkenness in nineteenth century New Zealand, bears out the above general concern raised by contemporaries. He states:

New Zealand in the nineteenth century was a society plagued by drunkenness and problems associated either in fact or in the firm opinion of a number of New Zealanders with drink.

From the 1830's to the 1890's in every settlement, one of the salient features of life was the widespread drunkenness.¹

1. P.F. McKimney, "The Temperance Movement in New Zealand 1835 - 94," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Auckland, 1968. pp. 29 & 10.

TABLE I

	Persons Convicted at the Wanganui Court as a Percentage of Wanganui's Population	Persons Convicted in New Zealand as a Percentage of the total Population (including Maoris)
1880	2.13	1.13
1881	2.02	0.97
1882	2.95	1.16
1883	2.32	1.24
1884	1.95	1.11
1885	2.84	1.05
1886	3.14	0.95
1887	1.85	0.81
1888	1.59	0.81
1889	1.76	0.86
1890	1.26	0.85
1891	1.71	0.78
1892	1.25	0.76
1893	1.13	0.71
1894	1.12	0.61
1895	0.83	0.62
1896	1.53	0.65
1897	1.78	0.67
1898	1.74	0.70
1899	2.02	0.78
1900	2.32	0.89
1901	2.29	0.96
1902	2.80	0.97
1903	2.49	1.00
1904	2.85	1.06
1905	2.28	0.94
1906	2.06	0.96
1907	2.04	1.04
1908	2.71	1.09
1909	2.46	1.03
1910	1.85	1.11
1911	2.38	1.08
1912	2.00	1.08
1913	1.50	1.04
1914	1.93	1.16
1915	1.73	1.15
1916	1.50	0.88
1917	1.97	0.76
1918	1.40	0.62
1919	1.46	0.65
1920	1.16	0.68

To support this contention of the seriousness of the drunkenness problem he is able to marshal an impressive list of facts and figures. For example the six west coast towns of Westport, Reefton, Brunner, Greymouth, Kumara and Hokitika, with a combined population of 14,000, had 134 licensed hotels. This amounted to one for every one hundred inhabitants, or one for every forty males.²

While it must be acknowledged that to refute or support McKimney's assertions prior to 1880 is beyond the scope of this thesis, it does seem that a reappraisal of his views is necessary for the period 1880 to 1920. On the surface, the fact that in 1880 5,985 people, (out of a total population of 528,459) were convicted of drunkenness in New Zealand, would suggest that a serious problem of liquor abuse existed. This is especially true if one considered that such convictions only showed the tip of a hidden iceberg.³ Yet if considered further, this amounted to only 1.13 per cent of the total population and this is a high figure compared with those for the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For example, five years later the figure had dropped slightly to 1.05 per cent while by 1890 it had declined to 0.85 per cent. (see Table 1.) In 1894 it reached the lowest point of 0.61 per cent of the total population, while after this date the highest total reached was 1.16 per cent. This was reached during a peak in 1914. Finally, by 1920 the percentage had dropped to 0.68 per cent.

Thus the rate of convictions does not indicate that a serious problem of drunkenness existed. Certainly one would have expected higher totals to support McKimney's assertions. Yet a paradox emerges in that precisely when the percentages are at their lowest, during the 1890's, one sees the emergence of several increasingly strong and well organized national

2. Ibid. p. 17.

3. These figures are taken from the Appendix to the Annual Report of the Police Commissioner in AJHR. It should be noted that the number of persons has been calculated in the Report, by making one conviction equal one person. This same method has been used in chapter IV to compile comparable figures for Wanganui.

prohibition organizations. Furthermore, although the prohibition movement consolidated itself during the first decade of the twentieth century, only six times between the years 1900 and 1910 do the convictions for drunkenness rise above 1.00 per cent of New Zealand's total population. Surely such low rates cannot fully account for the great amount of energy expended by the adherents of the prohibition movement during the period under consideration.

An important explanation for the growth of a large amount of public fervour lay in an apparent overreaction to the magnitude of the problem of alcohol. From generalizations put forward by newspapers, visiting speakers and politicians there appeared to contemporaries to be a greater than normal disjunction between their aspirations and the reality of colonial society. Consequently New Zealanders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries grappled with great fervour to solve one of the problems that had apparently begun to unhinge part of their established social order. It is from this effort to find a workable solution to the problem of drunkenness, that part of the central study of this thesis takes its raison d' être. More specifically this study is an attempt to see aspects of both the area of concern and the desired solution of prohibition being worked out, both at the national level and within the town of Wanganui.

II

The subjects of prohibition and the liquor trade, in general, have attracted a number of writers. The books and theses produced have described and analysed the subjects on a New Zealand wide basis. It was, therefore, initially planned that this thesis would take some of these general conclusions, especially several put forward by McKimmey, and apply and test them in a specific community, namely Wanganui. Further investigation showed, however, that this was not possible because there were no longer any extant minutes from the meetings of either the Wanganui Alliance or the Wanganui

Women's Christian Temperance Union. It was then decided to broaden the topic and undertake a general survey of drunkenness and prohibition in Wanganui, within the context of the national trends. Special attention was also planned for the numbers convicted for drunkenness in the Wanganui Magistrate's Court Records between 1880 and 1920. Accordingly, this thesis is divided into three sections designed to analyse different aspects of drunkenness and prohibition in the Wanganui borough.

The first section is chiefly concerned with describing the legislation enacted between 1880 and 1920, which dealt with liquor regulation. The second part has been designed to investigate whether the pattern of criminal drunkenness in Wanganui (as measured in convictions), reflects or deviates from the pattern prevailing throughout New Zealand. In this way Wanganui will be put in the context of the national scene. Evidence in this section is less speculative as it relies heavily on the Wanganui Court Records and the Annual Report of the Police Commissioner which is included in The Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives. Finally an attempt will be made to explain variations and trends in drunkenness convictions on the Graphs for both Wanganui and New Zealand.

Once the drunkenness problem in general terms has been assessed, the second section seeks to analyse, in some detail, the drunkenness that could be observed in Wanganui. This is done through an examination of information concerning those being convicted. The first point to determine is what proportion of those convicted were residents of Wanganui or visitors to the town. As Wanganui has always been an important servicing centre for its hinterland, there is good reason to believe that a number of those apprehended and convicted within Wanganui will be found to have permanent addresses outside the borough's boundaries. Further, by using electoral rolls it is possible to determine the occupation of those being convicted. In this way a survey of the social status of those being convicted can be compiled.

Finally it is intended to examine the Wanganui prohibition movement in the light of the observed, or believed in, drunkenness in the borough. Several problems are immediately encountered, for how does one begin assessing the strengths of the local prohibition movement? Newspapers give some indication through the reporting of prohibition activities and by printing advertisements for meetings of visiting and local prohibition speakers. The existence, however, of local newspaper bias, either for or against prohibition, has to be recognized and accounted for. Editorials, although helpful, are few in number on either prohibition or drunkenness and are generally limited to explaining, predicting or analysing the result of the local option poll. This poll is also a further indicator, as the number of votes cast either for or against prohibition gives some indication of the strength of the local movement. By using these sources some idea can be given of the strength of the prohibition movement within Wanganui.

III

Having outlined the direction of this thesis, it is important to set this investigation of Wanganui in the context of the national legislation passed between 1880 and 1920 concerning the liquor trade.

One of the earliest pieces of legislation making prohibition possible was the Licensing Act of 1873 by which liquor sales could be prohibited in a district, if this was demanded, by a petition signed by more than two-thirds of the residents. Although in practice it was not a particularly effective piece of legislation, it resulted from the first recognition of the principle that the granting of licences should be made subject to popular control. This principle was furthered under the Licensing Act of 1881 which was designed to present one unified body of licensing legislation, thereby repealing the individual provincial legislation relating to this question. The chief advance in this Act for the prohibition cause was the establishment of licensing districts.

Licensing committees comprising the resident magistrate and five elected members were established in these districts. They possessed the power to issue, at their discretion, seven classes of liquor licenses but no new licenses could be granted unless the ratepayers had determined by a majority vote to allow an increase. Polls on this question and the election of committees were held in 1881 but "interest in the country was generally not great and only about one-fifth of those eligible to vote did so."⁴

Finally, provision was made in the Act whereby any ten or more ratepayers might object by petition to the granting or renewal of any existing license or proposed new license. The committee's veto, however, only applied to new licenses and there was some campaigning to get polls extended to cover the issues of reduction and the abolition of licenses. This campaign was greatly helped by the founding, in 1886, of The New Zealand Alliance for the Suppression and Abolition of the Liquor Traffic. Public demand for popular control was brought to fruition in 1893 with the passing of the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act. The principal innovation was that the triennial poll was extended to cover the issues of continuance, reduction and no-license. An absolute majority was sufficient to determine the first two proposals, but the issue of no-license had to secure three-fifths of the vote cast to be successful. This provision proved to be the Achilles' heel of the prohibition movement, but in theory, it was now possible to curb the evils of liquor and reduce the amount of drunkenness. Theory was translated into practice when between 1894 and 1908 twelve districts obtained prohibition through the local option polls.⁵

4. J.R.S. Daniels, "Prohibition", in A.H. McLintock, (ed), An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Wellington, 1966, Vol. II., p. 873.

5. The total number of areas that gained prohibition in the period under consideration were:

1894	Clutha	1908	Bruce
1902	Mataura	1908	Wellington Suburbs
1902	Ashburton	1908	Wellington South
1905	Invercargill	1908	Masterton
1905	Oamaru	1908	Ohinemuri
1905	Grey Lynn	1908	Eden

The 1900's saw the prohibition vote gaining at each poll but it was hindered by the three-fifths provision. Partly as a reaction to this provision, demands were made for a national poll, which was provided by the Licensing Amendment Act of 1911. In this Act the reduction issue was eliminated but the three-fifths provision was retained in both polls as a concession to the trade. In the first poll conducted on this basis prohibition won 55.83 per cent of the total national vote and although narrowly defeated, the result justified the prohibition movement in pressing for the establishment of the extra poll.

The issue of separate polls had, however, caused a division within the Alliance and the result of the 1911 poll did not aid in the healing of this split. Consequently the Alliance was left weakened and it was not until 1917-1918 that pressure again built up to reform the provisions for taking the national poll. The Licensing Amendment Act of 1918 provided for the taking of a special poll on the proposal for national prohibition with compensation, which was to be determined by a bare majority vote. In the event of this poll not being carried succeeding polls were to be taken on three issues: national continuance, state purchase and control and national prohibition without compensation - an absolute majority being required to carry either of the last two provisions. The year 1919 promised to be the prohibitionists' most opportune chance to win New Zealand for its cause. However, despite increased financial aid from the Efficiency League the first poll on 10 April 1919 saw continuance carried by 51 per cent - the majority swinging away from prohibition as the votes from the Expeditionary Forces were counted. At the second poll on 7 December 1919 prohibition again failed by 3,362 votes to secure a majority over the combined total for continuance and state purchase and control. This defeat marked the supreme effort of the prohibition forces but it was not until 1928 that their percentage of votes at the polls began to decline. Nevertheless,

for over twenty years prohibition had proved itself to be a force to be reckoned with and its influence had spread to every part of New Zealand. Therefore it is within this chronological framework that prohibition activity within Wanganui must be fitted.

IV

As two of the main sources used in this thesis, namely The Record of Proceedings in Criminal Cases etc. in the Magistrates' Court at Wanganui and the electoral rolls for Wanganui and the surrounding electorates,^{6.} have not been widely used before as sources, some comment will be made on them to explain how the two have been used during the research for this thesis. The object of using the two sources in conjunction with each other was to obtain certain extra information which was not listed in the Court Records, such as addresses and occupations of persons convicted for drunkenness and to use it to fill out the picture of drunkenness in Wanganui.

A single entry in the Court Records shows the date of the conviction, the name of the person bringing the charge, the name of the person being prosecuted, the place where he was found, his condition of drunkenness, the date of the offence, the plea entered, the sentence handed down, and finally a record of the payment of any fine. At times additional information such as the place of origin, the age and the religion of those being convicted was also given.

The object of using these records was principally to count the number of convictions based on apprehensions that were recorded in the Wanganui borough. The main secondary source for figures of those convicted for drunkenness throughout New Zealand is The Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand, but their totals are based on apprehensions both within Wanganui and the

6. The surrounding electorates were those of Patea, Taumarunui, Rangitikei, Oroua, Palmerston North and Manawatu.

immediate surrounding area, for example the area between Wanganui and Fordell or between Wanganui and Whangaehu. As this thesis is intended to be a case study of Wanganui alone, such figures are not accurate enough; hence the discrepancy between the two lines on Graph A parts I and II. The second important object was to obtain the names of those convicted for drunkenness and to check them against the electoral rolls.

Although the Court Records contained much information there were certain disadvantages inherent in their use. The first concerned the recorded names themselves. Generally, only one christian name was given and no further initials were supplied. As a result it was sometimes difficult to obtain an accurate correlation between a name on the Court Records and one on the electoral rolls. It was possible, for example, to find a name with more than one address within the Wanganui electorate, or to find one name appearing in two different electorates with two different addresses. Consequently it was difficult to know which address was correct and in the latter example, to have made a decision would have allowed subjectivity to enter the sampling. A further disadvantage involving the names was that occasionally several aliases would be recorded beside a name in the Court Records. This made later identification virtually impossible. Finally the spacing of entries on a page and the handwriting were not always particularly good and as a result it was both easy to miss a recorded conviction for drunkenness and to misspell a name because such letters as n, m, r or u were difficult to distinguish between. Once again this factor made the later identification of names on the electoral rolls that much harder.

However, despite these disadvantages, an important advantage in using these records lay in the fact that from them one could discover whether a person had been convicted more than once for drunkenness within a six month period, if a person had been given a prohibition order and whether he had broken that order and been convicted. Furthermore one was also able to

distinguish between different types of drunkenness charges, for instance, between those charged with being drunk in charge of a conveyance and those charged with being drunk and disorderly. Finally one could note the number of successful prosecutions of sly grog sellers and of those selling liquor after hours. Thus the overall picture of liquor abuse within Wanganui could be well filled out.

A single entry on the electoral roll contained a name, consisting of one christian name and a surname, that person's full address (generally for Wanganui this included a street name but without a street number), his occupation and his franchise qualification. The main object was to find out whether those convicted for drunkenness in Wanganui were inhabitants of Wanganui or visitors and secondly to determine their occupation.

There were several advantages in using electoral rolls rather than other directories such as Almanacs. Firstly, in contrast to the Almanacs, the electoral rolls for all electorates were available for the complete period from 1880 to 1920. Furthermore it was compulsory to register and thus one could feel assured that a high percentage of those eligible to vote within an electorate would enrol. Therefore, the chances of names matching addresses were higher. Finally electoral maps are given in The Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, so that the area of interest around Wanganui could be clearly defined.

The main disadvantage of the incompleteness of the names on both the Court Records and electoral rolls has already been mentioned, but there was a second disadvantage arising from the method used for checking the names against the addresses. This arose because of a shortage of time which precluded the checking of names against all possible addresses. For example the Wanganui electoral roll was always the first to be consulted and if a name was found to correspond with an address in Wanganui, the index card containing that name was put to one side and not checked against the other electoral rolls in the area surrounding Wanganui. Thus if John Smith was

found to have an address in Wanganui his name was not checked against the possibility of finding another John Smith in either the Rangitikei, Patea or Manawatu electorates. The above method, then, was open to inaccuracies, but to have rectified it would have increased the chances of more than one address being found for a greater number of names.

There are two other minor disadvantages that must be mentioned briefly. First, one can apply the above method with greatest accuracy only once every three years when new rolls were compiled or modified for an election. Secondly, a minor difficulty arose in trying to distinguish between different types of occupations, the chief one being between the terms settler and farmer. Other examples included trying to define exactly what was meant by the term engineer. Was he an academically qualified person or merely a blacksmith who had diversified his job?

As a result of these difficulties and other unknown factors, not all the names in the Court Records, for the sample years, were found on the electoral rolls. In fact only fifty-five to sixty per cent of names with addresses were found. Moreover, due to the methodological approach used, it is probable that the number of names found to have addresses in Wanganui will be inflated. Consequently the results are not entirely accurate but the basic assumption that a substantial number of those convicted lived in Wanganui remains. Furthermore, the method used is reliable enough to build up a general impression, although it may result in errors of detail. Therefore, despite the shortcomings of this approach there did not seem to be any other way of finding answers to the questions that needed to be asked and it was felt that the questions were important enough to justify the finding of answers that must be fairly hesitantly advanced.

V

Finally in order to conclude this introduction it would be useful to set down some working definitions of the terms drunkenness and prohibition.

Luxford and Southwick define three degrees of intoxication:

- (a) A person is in a state of intoxication when, through the recent consumption of alcoholic liquor, control of his mental and bodily faculties has become impaired.
- (b) A person is in a state of drunkenness, when through the recent consumption of alcoholic liquor, he has become incapable of controlling his normal mental and bodily faculties.
- (c) A person is in a state of helpless drunkenness when through the recent consumption of liquor, he has become incapable of exercising any of his mental or physical faculties.⁷

Thus drunkenness is merely an advanced form of intoxication but a careful distinction is made in the Licensing Act of 1881 between drunkenness and a state of helpless drunkenness and this is closely followed in the Court Records.

Until the first national polls in 1911 the type of prohibition advocated and worked for, by local and national prohibition organizations, was not the total prohibition of all liquor in New Zealand. Rather prohibition meant the total prohibiting of the sale of all liquor within a licensing district. (In 1895 licensing districts were made identical in size and location to Parliamentary electorates.) That this type of prohibition was partial rather than total is shown by the fact that private persons could buy liquor outside the district and import it for their own use or to give away. This commonly occurred and is shown clearly by a paper laid before Parliament in 1910 giving the return of the quantity of liquor sent into the no-license districts during the year ended 30 June 1910.⁸ It is shown here, for example, that 22,291 $\frac{1}{16}$ gallons of liquor were imported into Ashburton, 12,479 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons were imported into Clutha and 78,283 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of liquor were imported into Invercargill.⁹ Thus prohibition as effected through the

7. J.H. Luxford and L.H. Southwick, Liquor Laws of New Zealand, 3rd edition, Wellington, 1964, p. 615.

8. AJHR, 1910, H-30a.

9. In the return placed before Parliament the term liquor included: Beer and Stout, Brandy, Cider, Gin, Schnapps, Rum, Whiskey and Wine.

licensing committees prior to 1893 or by the local option poll after 1893 only meant the closure of all licenses, both wholesale and retail, within any district. From 1911 onwards a national and a local poll were held. The national poll in contrast to the local option poll gave the opportunity for the first time to prohibit totally all alcohol from entering and being made in New Zealand. As this was such an important issue the national poll tended to assume increased significance over the local option poll, which in turn, tended to decline in importance. It is, then, important to realize the difference between the type of prohibition that the polls offered both before and after 1911. Had the national poll ever succeeded it would have brought in a much sterner type of prohibition than that offered by the local option poll. Consequently, the term prohibition can be somewhat misleading unless these distinctions are kept in mind.

CHAPTER II

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND DRUNKENNESS CONVICTIONS

Before attempting to outline the general pattern of drunkenness throughout New Zealand and its relation to Wanganui, a brief examination must be made of the legal restrictions affecting drinking and drinking habits. It will be seen that some of these will have an effect on Graphs A and B at different times between 1880 and 1920.

The Licensing Act of 1881 altered in only one significant respect the hours of sale fixed in the Licensing Ordinance of 1842. Prior to 1881 hotels had been permitted to open on Sundays, between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m., but this was prohibited in 1881. Hours for all other days of the week continued to be from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. An extension to midnight could be granted, but this provision was amended in 1893 to 11 p.m. and abolished in 1910. These hours were not altered until 1917, when, by what was thought to be a temporary war-time measure, the hours were restricted to 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for six days of the week. However, after the War these hours were found to be satisfactory both to the Trade and to the prohibition movement and they were retained. Thus until 1917 the hours of sale for liquor were extensive.

Along with the liberal hours, the legal age for being supplied with liquor for consumption on licensed premises was set at sixteen in 1881. However, as the law stood, a child of any age could enter a licensed hotel and purchase liquor for consumption outside the premises. This anomaly was amended in the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act of 1893, when it became illegal for any person under the age of thirteen to enter a licensed establishment and purchase liquor for consumption off the premises.¹

The fact that it took twenty-one years (from 1893 to 1914) before any

1. NZS, No. 34, 1893, p. 133.

legislation was passed which raised the legal age for the purchasing of alcohol for consumption outside licensed premises does suggest that juvenile drunkenness was not a big problem and few if any cases are recorded in the Wanganui Court Records for the forty years under study. In 1904 the age for being supplied with liquor for consumption on licensed premises was raised to eighteen. The age for consumption on licensed premises was raised to twenty-one in 1910, but it was not until 1914 that the age for purchasing liquor for outside consumption was raised from thirteen to twenty-one. Thus for much of the period under consideration the legal drinking age was relatively low.

The Licensing Act of 1881 also established fines for those convicted of drunkenness. First offenders, on conviction, were liable to a fine of not less than five shillings and not more than twenty shillings and in default of payment, imprisonment for not more than forty-eight hours. A second conviction within six months carried a fine of not more than sixty shillings or a maximum of seven days imprisonment. A third or subsequent conviction within six months, could lead to the imposition of a one hundred shilling fine or a maximum of fourteen days imprisonment. The limits were not amended until 1927. These provisions were incorporated into the Police Offences Act of 1884 with only one minor alteration, which drew a distinction between third and subsequent convictions within six months. Upon any such conviction beyond the third, the person so convicted was deemed to be an habitual drunkard and rendered himself liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months. Furthermore in this same Act a person arrested in a state of helpless drunkenness could be remanded for not more than seven days and after this period, if further treatment was required, be sent to a hospital or infirmary.

Evidence from the Court Records shows that generally fines were established at five shillings for first offenders, ten shillings for those with two convictions in six months and twenty shillings for those with three in six months. These latter categories varied somewhat more than the first.

Moreover it was common for first offenders, or people with an otherwise clear record, to be convicted and discharged or ordered to come up for sentence when called upon to do so. In the absence, however, of any further appearance by these people it must be presumed that the sentence against them was not put into effect. Thus it would seem, in the light of evidence from Wanganui, that fines were not as severe as they might have been. This seems to be a weak point in the Government's dealing with the prohibition movement, for one would have thought that to have raised the penalties would have provided the Government with a suitable bargaining point with which to counter the demands of the vocal prohibition forces.

The issuing of prohibition orders was also an effective way of dealing with constant offenders, or any person,

who by excessive drinking of liquor, misspends, wastes or lessens his or her estate, or greatly injures his or her health, or endangers or interrupts the peace or happiness of his or her family....².

The prohibition order, first provided for in the Licensing Act of 1881, forbade any licensed person to sell liquor to a prohibited person and any other person to obtain liquor for such a person. Fines up to ten pounds could be imposed for such offences. In the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act of 1895 it was made illegal for a prohibited person to enter licensed premises during the course of his prohibition order or for any other person to accompany a prohibited person into licensed premises. It was also illegal for the accompanying person to procure, incite or assist the prohibited person to drink or obtain liquor. Fines could again be large, with the maximum for this offence being ten pounds. By 1904 a prohibition order could automatically be made out if a person applied for it himself, or if a person had been convicted three times within six months.³ Prohibition orders were frequently issued by the Wanganui Magistrates' Court and a good number of those prohibited were convicted for liquor offences during the course of an order.

2. NZS, No. 21, 1881, p. 162-163.

3. NZS, No. 42, 1904, p. 243.

Another set of penalties for persistent drunkenness were those which dealt with habitual drunkards. The Lunatic Act of 1882 provided for an application to be made for an order of detention against an habitual drunkard.⁴ The application could be made by either the habitual drunkard himself, or by the parent, husband, wife, child or friend, and if it was successful the person was to be placed in an asylum for curative treatment for a maximum period of twelve months. In 1906 the Habitual Drunkards Act was passed and the condition for committal "to any institution willing to receive him and to make provision for his proper care and detention"⁵ rested solely on a person having been convicted for drunkenness three times within the past nine months. Under this Act the question of committing a person rested solely with the convicting magistrate, whereas, under the 1882 Lunatics Act, a magistrate was obliged to consider the written evidence of at least two doctors and any other person he saw fit to call upon before reaching a decision. This Act of 1906 was incorporated unchanged into the Police Offences Act of 1908, while the Lunatics Act of 1882 was written into the Lunatic Act of 1908. Thus an untidy legislative situation arose.

4. A habitual drunkard was defined by the Licensing Act of 1881 as a person convicted for drunkenness three times in six months. The Lunatics Act of 1882, however, stated that to be classed as an habitual drunkard and to have a detention order made out, such a person had to be reckoned as fulfilling one of the following conditions:

- (a) Where such a person is suffering or has been recently suffering from delirium tremens or other dangerous physical effects of habitual drunkenness; or
- (b) Where such a person, through habitual drunkenness, has recently been wasting his means and been neglecting his business or insufficiently providing for his family, or a wife has been wasting the means of her husband; or
- (c) Where such a person has recently, under the influence of drink, used or threatened violence towards himself or any member of his family. (N.Z.S., No. 34, 1882, p. 296)

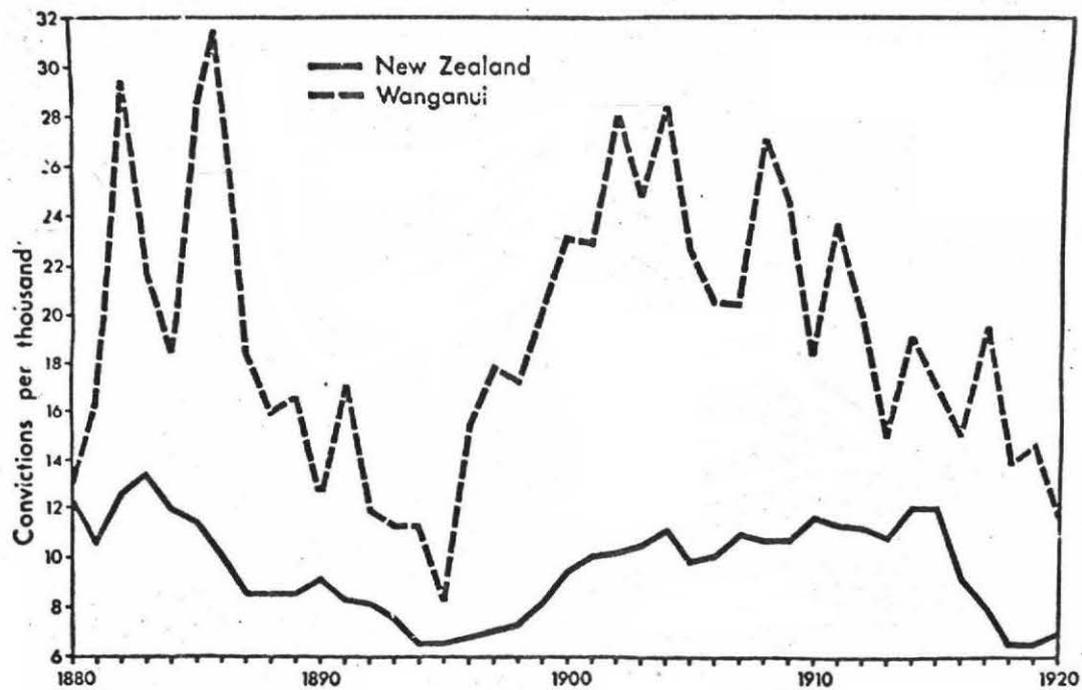
5. N.Z.S., No. 45, 1906, p. 126.

The word institution was defined as "any institution, society or body of persons whose objects or part of whose objects are the care and reclamation of persons addicted to drink, and authorized by the Government to receive and detain persons under this Act."

Nevertheless, in the Wanganui Magistrates' Court the magistrate's power of committal was not often used and while people were occasionally remanded for seven days, they were rarely if ever committed to an asylum.

Finally, special provisions were made for Maoris. Male Maoris were allowed to drink liquor at a bar but were not allowed to purchase liquor to consume off the premises. In this respect, something of a half-solution was attempted when an Act was passed in 1912 which enabled Maoris with certain educational or property qualifications to become honorary Europeans. Maori women were not allowed by the Licensing Amendment Act of 1910 to purchase liquor at all unless they were the wife of a person other than a Maori, or unless the liquor was to be used for certified medicinal purposes. Such provisions produced extensive sly grogging, particularly in the King Country, and provided many problems for the police in trying to trace such sales and in convicting those responsible. Partly as a result of this legislative discrimination, Maoris did not appear prominently in the Wanganui Court Records and as a group they are virtually excluded from this discussion. A further important reason was that, in all probability, the sly grogging trade was sufficient to satisfy the needs of most Maoris. As many of their pas were outside the area of immediate police surveillance it is possible that if any did become drunk, through illegally purchasing liquor, chances of their apprehension were very small.

A comparison of total convictions in Wanganui can now be made with the total convictions for the whole of New Zealand. It has already been mentioned that the Wanganui figures are inflated due to the apprehension of country people, but the national figures for convictions are also inflated. This is due to the incorporation into the totals of the number of males, convicted annually, who were not permanent residents in New Zealand. This number is given as a percentage of the total national convictions and is contained in the Annual Police Commissioner's Report, for the years 1902 to 1920. The highest figures are found in 1902 and 1920 being 13.09 per cent of the



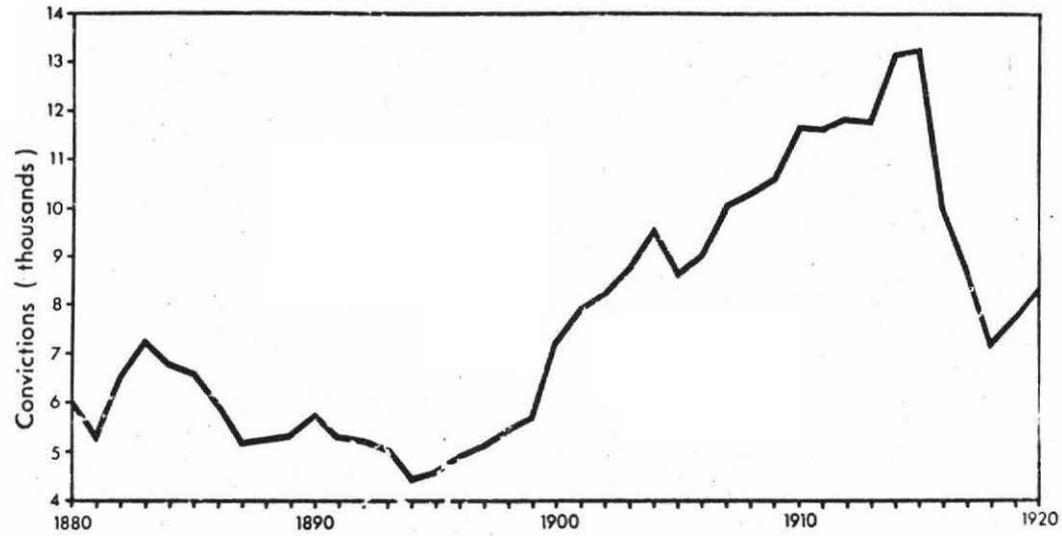
Graph C

Graph Showing Total Convictions per Thousand of the Population.

national total and 13.50 per cent respectively. The other figures range between these and the lowest figure, which was recorded in 1910, of 5.44 per cent. Therefore, as both the New Zealand and Wanganui totals are inflated, one is justified in comparing the two sets of figures.

By reference to the three graphs it can be seen that the total Wanganui convictions are set out in Graph A, the total New Zealand convictions are shown in Graph B and in Graph C the Wanganui and New Zealand convictions per thousand are shown. Graph C is necessary in order to correct the distortion introduced in Graphs A and B by the population increase. Graph C has several interesting points, one of them being for the period 1883 to 1894/95 it shows, on the national level, a declining rate of convictions per thousand. This decline means that there was an actual decrease in drunkenness, as evidenced by convictions, for the population was growing more rapidly than the number of convictions. From 1894/95 to the end of 1903 there is an increasing rate but from 1904 to 1915 it becomes erratic and shows only a small increase which is mainly concentrated between 1913 and 1914. The early increase indicates a rise in drunkenness convictions while the population is growing less rapidly than the rate of convictions. For the latter period, however, it can be seen that the rate of increase in convictions is only just remaining equal with the rate of increase in the population. From 1915 onwards there is a sharp wartime decline for the rate of convictions had dropped well below the rate of population increase.

The line indicating Wanganui's position on Graph C shows a trend which is at first similar to that for New Zealand but there are greater fluctuations. Between 1886 and 1894 there is an overall declining rate per thousand and this remains with some fluctuations from 1908 onwards. This again suggests that the population was growing at a faster rate than the number of convictions for drunkenness. The rise between 1895 and the beginning of 1904 occurs because the rate of convictions was growing more quickly than the population rate.



Graph B

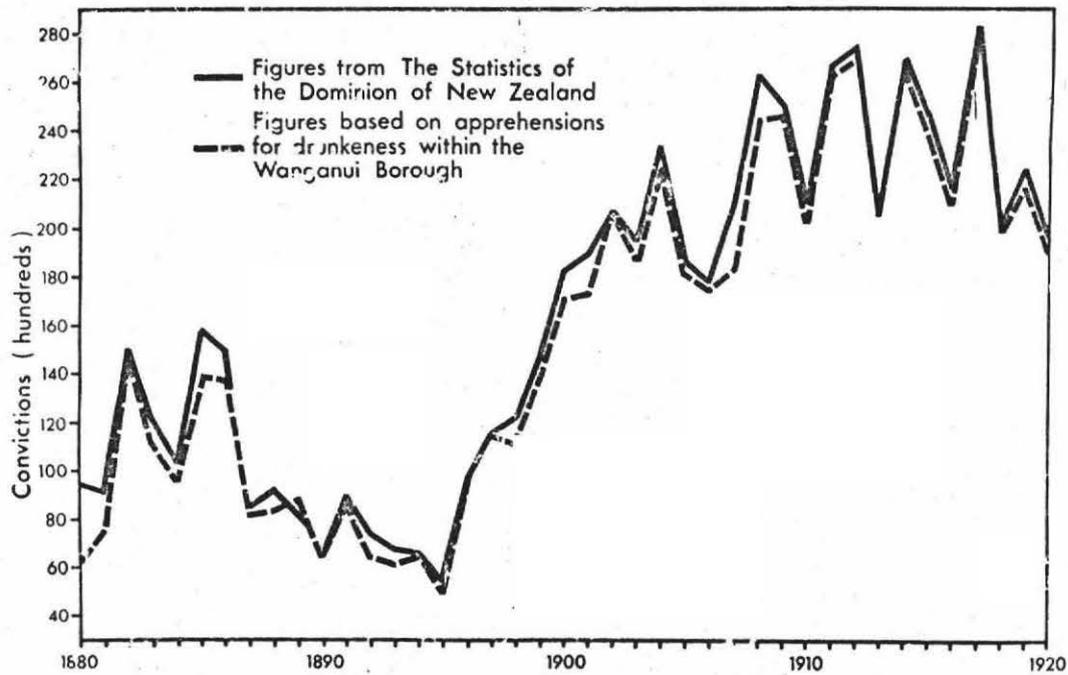
Graph Showing Total Convictions for Drunkenness in
New Zealand

Thus when reference is made to these graphs a clearer picture emerges especially when Graphs A and B are compared. It is, however, misleading to compare Graphs A and B with C for Graph C stands to A and B only in the role of interpreter.

As has been shown already, the pattern for convictions of drunkenness within Wanganui follows the broad outline of that noted for New Zealand. Consequently, it is reasonable to infer that causes that can be isolated for increases or decreases at the national level will also apply at the local level.

One important initial trend to note is the way in which convictions for drunkenness reflect the economic situation prevailing in New Zealand. The years 1880 to 1895 were a period of severe and continuing economic depression and this trend can be clearly seen reflected on both Graphs, especially after 1883 on Graph B and after 1885 on Graph A. Figures showing the consumption of alcohol over this period also show a decline in the quantity consumed. Thus it can be seen that convictions for drunkenness follow the national economic trends and these trends are so powerful a force that the impression they leave on the figures is a major one. The same effect will be seen during a period of boom. It is, however, difficult to explain why on occasions the Wanganui figures for convictions deviate sharply from the national pattern and also from the local trend itself. This can be seen, for example, on Graph A part I for the years 1882 and 1884. No sharp increase in Wanganui's population occurred in this period and the strength of the police force was maintained at a total of nine men. One factor that could have a bearing on the situation was the number of licenses issued in Wanganui during these two particular years. Unfortunately records are not available to check this possible explanation as the number of licenses issued in a district is only first recorded in The Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand in 1893. Finally changes in police efficiency might have a bearing on these two years, but there is no easy way of discovering if it fluctuated.

The period after 1896 also requires some examination both nationally and



Graph A

Graph Showing Total Convictions for Drunkenness in Wanganui.

in Wanganui. Not only is it a period of rapid increase in the number of convictions for drunkenness but as indicated by the Police Commissioner's Reports, from 1892 onwards, that department gave special attention to enforcing the Licensing Act. The particular area of their concern was Sunday trading and the closing of licensed premises at stipulated hours. In this regard an interesting point was included in the Commissioner's Report for the year ending 31 March 1894 concerning the difficulties the Police had in enforcing the licensing laws. He noted the effect of "public feeling", which had previously been so dormant on the issue of the supervision of licensed houses, that the public in general were prepared to let small offences pass by and so expected the Police to do likewise. If they did not, there were cries of oppression. He concluded by noting that the "public feeling" had changed and now demanded stricter enforcement.^{6.}

The period 1895 to 1904 saw a large increase in convictions for drunkenness. Undoubtedly recovery from the depression in the mid 1890's was one of the main causes. Other reasons can also be found, some of which are elaborated on in the Police Commissioner's Annual Reports. In 1899 he gave two reasons for the increase. He acknowledged the general prosperity of the colony, but added that there had been a large increase in the number of foreign ships calling at New Zealand ports and that there was no doubt that the crews of these ships had contributed significantly to the large increase in the number of convictions. He noted that it was the practice of many Courts to convict and discharge persons with no previous drunkenness conviction. He suggested, however, that for sailors this was a mistake, because "It is well known that sailors, (especially those employed in the stoke-holes of steam vessels) who are addicted to drink, very seldom obtain leave on arrival in port without getting more or less under the influence of drink."^{7.}

A further reason for the increase in convictions during this period is

6. AJHR, 1894, H - 14.

7. AJHR, 1899, H - 16.

given in an extract from the report of the Chief Inspector for the Canterbury and North Otago Police District. This is included in the Police Commissioner's Report for 1900. He suggested that the increase in convictions should not be considered an indication that there had been an increase in drinking to excess. Rather he considered it more likely that an increase in the prosperity of the country had led to a greater circulation of money which had caused an increase in the opportunities for "habitual tipplers". He went on to note that many of these "habitual tipplers" travelled about the country and had appeared on similar charges in several places at short intervals. This assertion was borne out by figures showing the percentage of males and females who had been convicted for drunkenness and who already had previous convictions.⁸ In 1901 40.40 per cent of males convicted had previous convictions, in 1902, 36.69 per cent had more than one conviction and in 1903 and 1904, 40.85 per cent and 42.33 per cent respectively had previous convictions. These figures are very high and show that first offenders make up only a small majority of all male persons convicted. From 1904 to 1920 the percentage declined slowly until it reached 32.88 per cent in 1920. The percentage of women with previous convictions was much higher. It reached its peak in 1901 at 75.81 per cent and declined to 58.94 per cent in 1920. There is, then, considerable evidence to support the suggestion made by the Chief Inspector of Canterbury and North Otago.

A third reason for the increase is found in the Commissioner's Report for the year ending 31 March 1905. Along with the increase in prosperity, an increase in population and in police activity were suggested as important factors. Between 1899 and 1900 the percentage increase of the total New Zealand population, including Maoris, was 1.78 per cent, for 1900-01 it was 2.44 per cent, for 1902-03 it was 2.89 per cent and for 1903-04 the percentage was 2.86. From this date on the percentage increase remained high but

8. See the Police Commissioner's Annual Report in AJHR, H - 16. These figures are only given from 1901 onwards.

fluctuated to a small extent.

Finally, the possibility that there was an increase in police activity should be taken into account. This is suggested by an increase in the numbers of police throughout New Zealand, which between 1898 and 1904, amounted to ninety in six years. This was a considerably larger increase than in the previous six years when the number rose by only fifty-four. By relating these figures to the population of New Zealand, it can be seen that the ratio of police to the population was one for every 1,401 persons in 1892 and decreased to one for every 1,435 persons in 1898. When these previous six years are compared with the six years from 1898 to 1904, little if any increase in police activity is possible, for the ratio was one for every 1,401 persons in 1898 but increased to be one for every 1,398 persons by 1904. Therefore, if police activity did increase it could only have been because either overall efficiency increased, or because police attention was focused upon the problem. In Wanganui, however, the increase in police-per-thousand of the population was sufficient to produce increased efficiency and this would suggest that other smaller centres were similarly getting better police service.

Thus there are two important reasons in accounting for the increase in convictions during this period. They are the high percentage increase in the population and the improvement in the economic situation of the country. Other factors such as increases in the number of visiting ships, people with previous convictions, or police activity account for some convictions but are secondary to the two main causes.

The reasons for the increase in convictions for drunkenness in Wanganui, between 1898 and 1904, are slightly harder to account for because the extracts from the Reports of the Chief Inspector for the Wanganui Police District do not have any suggestions. Nevertheless, some of the explanations given for the whole of New Zealand are also applicable to Wanganui. Without doubt, one of the chief reasons for the increase must again lie with the improvement

in the economy. As the state of the economy was seen to have such an effect on convictions for drunkenness in Wanganui during the 1886 to 1894 period, it is logical to assume that when a boom period corresponded with an increase in the number of convictions, an important underlying factor must have been the state of the economy. (Refer to Graph A part I.)

The other principal reason was the significant increase in the population of the Wanganui borough. It rose from 6,200 in 1896 to 9,000 in 1908 - an increase of 2,800. Furthermore the percentage increase was very high especially between 1898 and 1901 when it was 6.91 per cent, 7.12 per cent and 3.02 per cent in successive years. In this latter period there was also an increase in the total number of liquor licenses issued in Wanganui.⁹ In 1898 thirty-one licenses were granted, while by 1904 the total had risen to thirty-eight. This fact must have aided the increase in convictions.

It was also noted above that an increase in the number of ships visiting New Zealand ports was said to effect the total number of convictions. As Wanganui during this period had an important port, one would expect that this suggestion could be applied to Wanganui. From 1910 onwards, however, figures were given in the Police Commissioner's Annual Report noting the number of sailors convicted of drunkenness while on leave. In Wanganui the average was no more than three or four per year,¹⁰ and consequently this suggestion cannot be profitably applied to Wanganui.

A further factor, having a possible influence on the situation in Wanganui, was the fact that between 1898 and 1901 the Wanganui Police Force rose from a total of seven to thirteen. By comparing these figures with Wanganui's population over the same period, it was found that in 1898 there was one policeman for every 914 persons, while by 1901 there was one policeman

9. This total number of licenses included:- Licensed Houses, New Zealand Wine Licenses, Packet Licenses, Wholesale Licenses and Conditional Licenses.

10. AJHR, 1910 - 20, H - 16.

for every 580 persons. In 1904 the ratio had only decreased slightly to one for every 607 persons. Thus an increased amount of police activity was likely and some of this could have been directed towards a stricter enforcement of the licensing laws.

Finally it was suggested, in seeking to explain the increase in convictions in New Zealand as a whole, that there was an increased number of persons coming before the Courts, who had been convicted more than once on a drunkenness charge. This was also borne out in Wanganui where, for the period 1898 to 1904, the number of people convicted with more than one conviction in six months was 176. In the six years immediately prior to 1898 the total was only eighty. So once again a significant increase occurred which raised the total number of convictions.

Therefore in accounting for the increases in Wanganui it must be stated that the chief causes were an increase in the population and an upturn in the economy. Other reasons that were seen to have an influence at the national level also had an effect in Wanganui, with the exception of an increase in the number of sailors being convicted. Thus increases in the Police Force, the population, liquor licenses and the number of persons being convicted more than once in six months, are all valid causes to account for the increase.

In assessing this increase both at the national and local level the comments of the Police Commissioner writing in 1901, when he was trying to explain an increase of 1,010 convictions throughout New Zealand, are useful.¹¹ He stated that an increase in the convictions for drunkenness should not be assumed to arise from the increased efficiency of the Police Force. He asserted that drunkenness falls within the category of offences that are unpreventable and cannot, therefore, be taken as a reflection on the efficiency or otherwise of the Police Force. Rather the best criterion of efficiency is the rise or fall in the number of preventable offences such

11. AJHR, 1901, H - 16.

as thefts or burglaries. Applying this comment to the Police Force as a whole he noted that during 1901 there had been a decrease of fifty-three such offences and concluded that the Force as a preventative body had at least maintained the rate of efficiency that existed in 1899.

The years 1904 to 1906 on both Graphs A and B provide a break in the rate of increase. In fact this decline and slackening in the rate can only be explained in terms of the Licensing Amendment Act of 1904 which raised the legal age for obtaining liquor, for consumption within licensed premises, to eighteen. A further important provision in explaining the decrease was the clause which discontinued the granting of licenses to railway refreshment rooms. Previously railway refreshment rooms had not been considered licensed premises within the meaning of the Acts. The Police Commissioner, writing in 1904, stated that "This fact is known and taken advantage of by many prohibited persons who cannot be reached by the Police."¹² The beneficial results of the 1904 Act are borne out by both the 1906 and 1907 Police Commissioner's Reports.¹³

The trend of convictions for the years 1908 to 1914 is somewhat more difficult to account for, largely because the trend is erratic, (especially for Wanganui) and also because of a lack of comment in the Police Commissioner's Annual Reports. The year 1908 marks the beginning of fluctuations in the economy and this may well have had an influence on the rise or fall of convictions. With regard to the national increase it is difficult to isolate any causes except that the population increased steadily over this period from 960,642 in 1908 to 1,095,994 in 1914.

The overall increase in Wanganui's convictions during this period can be partly attributed to the rise in the population. The population rose from 9,000 to 13,955 in 1914 making an average increase of 827 per year.

12. AJHR, 1904, H - 16.

13. AJHR, 1906, (session II) H - 16 and 1907, H - 16.

The sharp decrease in Wanganui's convictions, however, between 1909 and 1910 can be partly explained by examining the economic situation in Wanganui. (See Graph A part II.) An extract from the report of the Inspector at the Wanganui Labour Department,^{14.} states that over the twelve month period ending 31 March 1909 there was a tightness of money which had a detrimental effect on business and many unskilled and skilled labourers, especially carpenters, were unemployed. As the Graph suggests, however, the depression was of short duration and by 31 March 1910 the Labour Department's Report noted that trade generally had shown a decided improvement but money was still not plentiful.^{15.} By 1911 the Report indicated that the depression had passed, for it notes that the year had been prosperous and skilled artisans had been well employed throughout.^{16.} The Labour Department Reports, however, are of little help in explaining the decrease in convictions between 1912 and 1913, for the Report in 1913 notes that the year was generally prosperous, that employment was steady throughout and that there had been a demand for competent tradesmen.^{17.} But no mention is made of the position of unskilled workers.

The only other official comments that can be used to explain the Wanganui trend are made by the Chief Police Inspector of the Wanganui District in 1911 and 1912. In 1911 he reported that increases in Wanganui can be attributed to the "more effective steps taken to keep the streets clear of drunken persons".^{18.} Again in 1912 when commenting on the increase, he stated that it was due to "The continuing prosperity of the country and better wages paid to all classes of labour."^{19.} However, in the absence of

14. This extract is found annually up to 1916 in the Annual Report of the Labour Department, AJHR, 1909, H - 11, pp. xlvi - xlvii.

15. AJHR, 1910, H - 11, p.xliv.

16. AJHR, 1911, H - 11, p.xli.

17. AJHR, 1913, H - 11, p.17.

18. AJHR, 1911, H - 16.

19. AJHR, 1912, H - 16.

any further comments little more can be added. Thus the main reasons for the trend in the Wanganui convictions are the increase in Wanganui's population, the local economic situation and the more effective police activity, reported in 1911.

Both Graph A and B end in sharp declines, beginning in 1917 on Graph A part II and 1915 on Graph B part II. This decline can be largely explained in terms of the emergency wartime legislation and in the departure of more than 100,000 men with the Expeditionary Forces. The first piece of legislation was the War Regulations Amendment Act which came into force on 21 August 1916. This Act contained two important provisions relevant to this study. The first was the unique "treating clause" whereby it became illegal to buy or in any way offer money which could be used to purchase liquor for anyone but oneself. The second provision made it illegal for any woman to enter a bar after 6 p.m. (At this point licensed premises were still open until 10 p.m.) The effect of these two provisions on drunkenness convictions is very evident. Further, as the Police Commissioner stated in 1917 "The regulations have been rigorously enforced. Police Officers in charge of districts are almost unanimous in attributing the large decrease in drunkenness chiefly to the operation of these regulations".²⁰

The other piece of legislation was the Sale of Liquor Restriction Act which became effective from 1 December 1917. Under this Act the time of legal sale was reduced to the hours between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. This statute was only intended to remain in force for the duration of the War and for the six months following, but this limitation was repealed by section 2 of the Act of 1918. This was, therefore, something of a victory for the prohibition movement. The effect of these statutes was marked, as can be readily seen from the Graphs, and an upturn in convictions only occurred with the return of peace. This initial upturn occurred in spite of the

20. AJHR, 1917, H - 16.

continuance of the Act of 1917 and can be largely attributed to the ending of wartime morale.

Therefore it can be seen that, except for this period 1908 to 1914, the two Graphs show the same general trends, and both are particularly affected by the demographic and economic situations prevailing throughout the country. It can also be seen that other factors, such as an increase in the strength of the Police Force, a rise in the number of persons with more than one conviction in six months, or an upsurge in Parliamentary legislation, all of which were originally suggested as reasons to account for increase in convictions at the national level, can also be successfully applied at the local level to account for increases. Thus Wanganui's pattern of convictions broadly follows the trend prevailing throughout New Zealand.

CHAPTER III

CRIMINAL DRUNKENNESS IN WANGANUI

Besides containing a record of the number of convictions, the Court Records contain other pieces of information about drunkenness which can be utilised. For example, information concerning the location of a person found drunk, if collected over a number of years, would provide the basic material necessary for the compiling of a dispersal map. This would show the streets of Wanganui and the numbers apprehended for drunkenness in any street. Further, if the location of hotels were put on such a map, it is probable that a significant pattern would begin to emerge of clusters of apprehensions in the area where the majority of hotels were located. The hotels would also be seen to be clustered around the central communication routes in Wanganui which were principally the river with its wharves, the adjacent railway station and the road bridge. It is from this area that a large number of the hotels' clients would be expected to come.

A further exercise, that could be considered, would be a detailed examination of the age, the country of origin and the religious denomination of those convicted for drunkenness in Wanganui. By comparing these three categories with the corresponding categories in the national statistics for either the total population or the total male population, a useful additional picture could be compiled on observable drunkenness in Wanganui. To avoid distortion, however, the years beyond 1920 would have to be used.^{1.}

1. Such an examination was initially planned for this thesis but was later discontinued. This was partly because the information was first recorded in 1914 and consequently only a small number of sample years were usable because this thesis ended in 1920. In fact only five years were available because the data for both 1914 and 1917 was incomplete. Further, the years corresponded with those of World War I and thus any examination, especially of ages, would have been distorted. Such distortion would also have limited the number of useful comparisons that could have been made with the years prior to 1914. Finally the time needed to compare this sample with the New Zealand population was not available.

One analysis that has been attempted, involved two basic parts. First, the residential location of those being convicted of drunkenness has been investigated, with the aim of making a rough urban-rural distinction. From this information it will be possible to make some comment on Wanganui's function both as a servicing centre and a focal point for communications with the surrounding district. Second, information has been compiled to determine, in a general way, what type of occupation those convicted for drunkenness were engaged in and it is hoped that in this way their social status will become apparent. The years selected for this analysis are 1890, 1893, 1896, 1899, 1902, 1905, and 1908. In the latter years, from 1902 to 1908, the Wanganui electorate was primarily urban and therefore a slightly clearer distinction between urban and rural dwellers has been possible in the analysis. (See Map) The study will work backwards through the sample years in order to begin with a reasonably large sample to establish the trends.

In analysing the names that were found, a number were deducted from the total in each year after an initial calculation, involving the total number of persons convicted and the total number of convictions, had been completed. The first two groups that were deducted were those which in the Court Records had several aliases and those which belonged to Maoris. Such names were deducted because it was found to be impossible to identify them in the electoral rolls with any accuracy. The only other group of names requiring special comment were those which had more than one address in two different electorates outside Wanganui. For example, a common name such as John Smith might be found to have an address in the Rangitikei and Patea electorates. Such names were excluded after the completion of the initial persons-to-convictions analysis, for it was impossible to distinguish which of the two addresses was the correct one. In 1908, for instance, six names in this category were excluded along with nine in the other two categories. Names with two addresses within the Wanganui electorate were retained within

the full analysis because at no time was it necessary to distinguish between the addresses within the borough or within an electorate. The aim was only to distinguish between those found within the Wanganui electorate and those found in outside electorates.

In 1908 the number of persons who were convicted for at least one offence of drunkenness totalled 191. In all those 191 persons produced 244 convictions, so that 22 per cent were convicted for drunkenness more than once within the year. Furthermore in 1908 the addresses of 91 of the 176 valid names were identified, that is 51.70 per cent, leaving 85 names that were not located. A breakdown of the 91 names found, revealed that 35 of them, or 38.46 per cent, came from outside the boundaries of the Wanganui electorate. (See Map.) Of these, 13 came from the Rangitikei electorate, 7 from the Patea electorate, 9 from the Taumarunui electorate, 4 from the Manawatu electorate and 2 from the Oroua electorate. Thus it can be clearly seen that a significant number of those being convicted, in 1903, came from well outside the boundaries of Wanganui.

An investigation into the occupations of the 56 people whose addresses were located in Wanganui, shows that a large proportion held jobs of a general labouring nature. In fact out of the 56 names, 15 belonged to labourers and this was by far the biggest group. Some of the other manual occupations, with the number convicted in brackets were:- contractors (3), carpenters (4), carters (2), plumber (1), blacksmith (1), bricklayer (1), and one farmer. The only exceptions to this general pattern were the convictions of a hotelkeeper, a master mariner and a consulting chemist. The other interesting occupational group was that of engineer from which two were convicted. It cannot be established, however, whether these were academically qualified men or rather men who were more skilled at metal-working than the average blacksmith.

A similar occupational pattern also emerges for those living outside Wanganui. Of the 35 found, 18 names belonged to labourers, of whom over half lived in Rangitikei. Other occupations included five farmers, one

settler, one ploughman, one enginedriver, one compositor, one woolbuyer and a boardinghouse keeper.

Thus even with these three exceptions it is possible to conclude that in 1908 the majority of those convicted in Wanganui overwhelmingly came from the unskilled and skilled labouring sector of society. The pattern outlined for this year is also reflected in other sample years.

In 1905, for example, 147 persons were convicted of at least one offence of drunkenness and 186 convictions were recorded. Thus 20.96 per cent were convicted for drunkenness more than once within the year. Of the 134 valid names 75 or 55.96 per cent were found and of this group 75.58 per cent were located within Wanganui. Consequently 17, or 22.66 per cent of the total, had addresses outside Wanganui. Once again the largest proportion came from Rangitikei, there being ten from this electorate, while three came from the Patea and four from the Manawatu electorates. So a smaller, but still considerable, number of those being convicted came from the surrounding districts.

The occupational structure is very similar to that of 1908. For example, of the ten names found in the Rangitikei electorate, six were labourers, while the other four consisted of a confectioner, a miner, a bushman and a blacksmith. Within Wanganui, of the 58 names and addresses found, thirteen were labourers. The occupations of some of the others included:- carpenters (3), painters (2), saddler (1), tailors (2), contractors (2), and one jockey. The only exception to this occupational grouping was one jeweller. Thus if the results of 1908 and 1905 are combined, a pattern can be seen clearly emerging.

It would be profitable to consolidate this emerging pattern by noting the year 1902 in detail, before looking at the four years in the 1890's in a more summary form. In 1902, 158 persons produced 207 convictions, so that 23.67 per cent were convicted more than once. Of the 149 valid names 82, or 55.62 per cent were found, of which 60 had addresses in the

Wanganui electorate. Twenty-two, or 26.82 per cent, were found to have addresses in the electorates surrounding Wanganui. Eleven came from Rangitikei, seven from Patea and four from Manawatu.

Again an analysis of the occupations of those who had addresses within Wanganui, shows the predominance of labouring class, for in this year, fourteen labourers were convicted. Other occupations included:- blacksmiths (2), engineers (3), farmers (4), bakers (2), settlers (4), butcher (1), bricklayer (1) and finally one nurse. The only exceptions to this pattern were the convictions of two school teachers, two clerks and one solicitor. Thus little emphasis is needed to underline the great predominance of labourers and skilled artisans, in contrast to professional men, amongst those who were convicted.

The four sample years of the 1890's bear out the above pattern, although the totals within the years are smaller than those previously considered and therefore for this discussion most of the figures are given as percentages. As the electoral map for this period shows, the Wanganui electorate now included a large country area within its boundaries. When checking addresses for these years, it was found that some names had addresses within the Wanganui electorate, but outside the immediate boundaries of the town. Such names have been counted with those found in the electorates surrounding Wanganui.

In the four sample years in the 1890's, a return of more than 50 per cent was obtained in all years. In 1899, 59 per cent of the addresses were found, 53.94 per cent in 1896, 62.50 per cent in 1893 and 54.05 per cent in 1890. Moreover, a sizeable number of people being convicted were found to have addresses outside Wanganui. For instance in 1899 27.11 per cent of those identified lived outside the town, in 1896 21.95 per cent, in 1893 26.11 per cent and in 1890, 45 per cent lived beyond the borough boundaries. It is clear that well over 20 per cent of those apprehended and convicted for drunkenness in the Wanganui Magistrates' Court actually lived outside the

boundaries of Wanganui. This proportion is large when it is considered that hotels were in existence in country areas surrounding Wanganui, for example, at Turakina, fourteen miles south of Wanganui, a hotel had been built by 1896.² That so many visitors to Wanganui were being apprehended and convicted emphasises Wanganui's role as an important servicing centre during this period. As early as 1878 Wanganui was connected by rail to Longburn and in 1886 to Wellington via Longburn. In 1885 Wanganui was connected by rail to New Plymouth. Therefore opportunity was provided for travel by rail, as well as by road, during this period and the establishing of these lines of communication may well have increased the number of visitors who, during their stay in Wanganui, were apprehended and convicted for drunkenness.

The occupational trends of these sample years are very similar to those of the later years. Labourers feature prominently in the totals, there being thirteen in 1899, fourteen in 1896, six in 1893 and five in 1890. One other occupation which is prominent is that of carpenter; in 1890 three were convicted, in 1896 two, and in both 1893 and 1890, one. Further, two farmers were convicted in 1899 and three in 1893. The only other prominent occupation is that of settler; three were convicted in 1899, none in 1896 and three in 1893. The remaining occupations are all of a labouring type with three exceptions. In 1896 an accountant was convicted, in 1890 a tutor and in both 1899 and 1896 a clerk. Apart from these exceptions, there is a distinct absence from the records of people from the professional sector of society.

It would be unsound, however, to conclude that professional people and the upper middle and upper classes were completely free from the attraction of alcohol and its effects. It would be safer to conclude that people from other social strata were more sophisticated in their drinking habits, procuring liquor through wholesale stores for private consumption. If this did occur, then the chances of being apprehended for drunkenness were

2. Located in The New Zealand Post Office Directory, 1896 - 1897.

much fewer.

In order to form some idea of the possible extent of drunkenness among both non-labouring and labouring people, it is necessary to note the different types of licenses granted in Wanganui. Licensed hotels generally only averaged about one third of the total number of licenses granted. During the period 1894 to 1910 two New Zealand wine licenses were granted in Wanganui.³ This type of license permitted the licensee, under the Licensing Act of 1881, to sell to the public quantities of wine not exceeding two gallons.⁴ Packet licenses were also granted, which allowed liquor to be sold on board ship or a steamer. Between 1894 and 1910 the number of these licenses increased from two to eight. Wholesale licenses for the sale and delivery of liquor in quantities of not less than two gallons were also granted; they totalled five in 1894 and increased to seven by 1910.

The final type of license, the conditional license, permitted the sale of liquor for periods of not more than seven days at fairs, military encampments, races, regattas, rowing races, cricket grounds and other places of amusement, and at saleyards. Such activities usually lasted for short periods and one would expect them to be a significant attraction in a colonial society. Such amusements could be expected to attract a number of people, including out-of-town visitors, and it is possible that many convictions for drunkenness originated at either the places where conditional licenses were operated, or in licensed hotels. In fact the number of conditional licenses issued was quite high and they fluctuated between eight and ten per year in the 1890's, reaching a total of fifteen by 1910. Conditional licenses and licensed hotels would, then, appear to be the main

3. The figures giving a detailed break-down of the different types of liquor licenses issued in Wanganui are only given in The Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand for the years 1894 to 1912. After 1912 only the total number of licenses issued is given.

4. NZS, 1881, No. 21, pp. 136-137.

source of much of the drunkenness that passed through the Magistrates' Court. The fact that there were seven wholesale licenses by 1910 also suggests that a considerable quantity of liquor passed through this outlet and it is quite likely that much would have been sold to the non-labouring sector. It has not been possible, however, to obtain figures showing the quantity of liquor handled by the holders of the different types of licenses and therefore the above statements must remain merely suggestions.

In conclusion, the percentages show that the number of people from out-of-town who were convicted, remained reasonably stable over the period 1890 to 1908. The percentages range between twenty and twenty seven per cent with only two exceptions in 1890 and 1908, when the percentages were 45 per cent and 38.46 per cent respectively. It would seem, bearing in mind the limitations of the methodology, that the main increase in convictions occurred amongst people living in Wanganui. It is probable that Wanganui assumed the role of a servicing/drinking centre rather than adopting the role of a temporary stopping point for transient labourers travelling to Taranaki or the King Country. The latter role, however, may have assumed a greater degree of importance after 1908 when with increasing national prosperity it is probable that labourers would have travelled greater distances to find better employment. This may be partly the reason for the considerably higher percentage in 1908.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRENGTH OF THE PROHIBITION MOVEMENT IN WANGANUI

The placing of the total convictions against the total population, in percentage form, provided a useful measuring rod against which the national prohibition movement could be examined and compared. The same process can be used in Wanganui and in contrast to the national pattern, the percentage totals are higher. In 1880 those apprehended and convicted for drunkenness were equal to 2.13 per cent of Wanganui's population. (For a full comparison of the figures see Table I.) By 1886 a large increase had occurred and a new rate of 3.14 per cent was recorded. As the table shows, a decline occurred during the 1890's until the lowest rate of 0.83 per cent was recorded in 1895. During the first twelve years of the twentieth century the figures continued to remain relatively high, being 2.28 per cent in 1905, 2.46 per cent in 1909, and declining from 1912 onwards to be 1.93 per cent in 1914 and 1.16 per cent in 1920.

As the preceding chapter has shown, these figures should not be taken entirely at their face value for they were somewhat inflated by the inclusion of persons who lived in the surrounding district. The local prohibition leaders, however, had no easy or accurate way of knowing what percentage of those convicted lived outside Wanganui and it is highly probable that they believed a greater number of people who lived in Wanganui were being convicted than was actually the case. The percentages, then, should be taken as reflecting the situation which local prohibition supporters believed existed. Therefore if such a large amount of activity could be created by the prohibition organizations at the national level, at a time when the national percentages were so low, one would expect at least a similar amount of continuing activity in Wanganui

where the rate of observable drunkenness was comparatively higher. This fact combined with the local knowledge and experience possessed by the prohibitionists within the Wanganui licensing district, should have made for a strong and active prohibition organization. This, however, does not appear to have been the case.

There are two main methods that can be used to show that the prohibition organization and activity in Wanganui was not particularly strong, but rather confined to a small core of people. The first method is to examine the reporting of prohibition activity, within the two local newspapers, particularly prior to the elections, while the second involves a close examination of the results of the local and national option polls that were held in Wanganui.

From a comment by Cocker and Murray, it appeared that prohibition was particularly favoured by one Wanganui newspaper.

It cannot be said that the newspaper press in those early years, any more than in later years, proved a factor in temperance education, otherwise than by admitting discussion concerning it in the correspondence columns. What gains have been made in temperance progress have been in the teeth, for the most part, of newspaper opposition. There were, however, some honourable exceptions that are worthy of mention. Mr Gilbert Carson, an early Auckland stalwart, was not slow to affirm his temperance principles when he became proprietor [in 1874] of the Wanganui Chronicle. 1.

He edited and controlled the paper for many years and it consistently supported the Prohibition Movement. 2.

The other newspaper in Wanganui during this period was the Wanganui Herald which, while not being entirely an advocate for the Trade, was not one of Cocker and Murray's "honourable exceptions". The Wanganui Chronicle was the main newspaper consulted for this study.

The newspaper analysis began in 1890 and two interesting points were found in that year. There was a small report given on a public meeting sponsored by the Wanganui branch of the Sons and Daughters of Temperance.³ This report stated that the branch had been formed two years previously, in 1888,

1. Rev. J. Cocker and J. Malton Murray, (eds), Temperance and Prohibition in New Zealand, London, 1930, pp. 46-47.

2. Ibid, p. 212.

3. WC, 16 September 1890.

with an initial membership of seven which in two years had grown to forty. There was also a report of a meeting of the Wanganui Band of Hope.^{4.} These two reports indicate that sufficient temperance awareness had been aroused in Wanganui to form at least two temperance societies and that they had a growing membership.

In the year 1894 the first local option poll was held. The day on which it was held, 21 March, was also the date when the election for the local licensing committee was held. Consequently the Wanganui Chronicle contained much information on both issues and had the unprecedented number of ten editorials on subjects relevant to the poll and the licensing election. Most were designed to educate people upon the issues concerning the forthcoming poll. The large number of editorials may have been occasioned by the fact that although there appeared two notices advertising meetings for members of the Prohibition League, there were no notices or advertisements for public meetings where the prohibition viewpoint would be advocated. The Wanganui Chronicle, with its known prohibition sympathies, may well have felt the need to take over the role of educating the public. The articles and reports that it carried definitely supported this view. At least four editorials were concerned with the details of the local poll. One gave detailed instructions on what the voting papers contained and how to correctly cast one's vote.^{5.} The editorial the following day set out the significance of voting for reduction.^{6.} The reduction issue was very important at this poll for if prohibition was not carried, its votes were added to those for reduction. This was in contrast to the prohibition option which had only to obtain a fifty per cent majority to be carried. The other important provision, highlighted by this editorial, was that

4. WC, 30 September 1890.

5. WC, 15 March 1894.

6. WC, 16 March 1894.

fifty per cent of those enrolled had to vote before a poll could be declared valid.⁷ Consequently, as this was the first poll, it was important that the rather complicated provisions were made clear. That such public education was needed was shown when four days later, on the eve of the poll, a further editorial appeared which was intended to correct the false impression that prohibition, if carried, would completely shut all hotels. The last of the four editorials, specifically written about the poll, was published immediately after polling day and sharply criticized the arrangements for recording the vote. This editorial concluded:

We have said enough, we think, to show that the whole affair was a public scandal and to make it abundantly manifest⁸ that a rigid scrutiny and inquiry ought to be made.....

A further editorial and one article, the latter contributed by Stout, were printed and both were in favour of prohibition, making reference to Canada and Australia respectively. One other editorial drew attention to the fact that many people were failing to register on the electoral rolls. Finally one was given over to a keen attack on seven of the candidates in the licensing election. The editor wrote: "The candidates put forward by Mr Keesing could well have written across their backs 'Approved by the Publicans and their friends and sympathizers.'"⁹ Indeed this anti-Trade tone was typical of all the Wanganui Chronicle's editorials that were written at this time. Thus it would seem that the local prohibition organization was weak and did not have the resources, as yet, to hold public meetings. Further supporting evidence is found in the fact that public interest in the poll appears to have been small and only fifty-two per cent of those enrolled actually voted.

By 1896 the position had altered slightly. In the four months prior to the local poll there were at least four outside speakers, one of whom

7. Both these provisions were amended in 1896.

8. WC, 24 March 1894.

9. WC, 1 March 1894.

was the Reverend L.M. Isitt who gave three public lectures and one sermon. The number of editorials in the Wanganui Chronicle had, however, declined to four written before the poll and one written after it. Two reiterated points from the addresses of visiting speakers and one explained the technicalities of the amended provisions concerning the local option poll. The other was written on the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act Amendment of 1896. Probably the most significant index of growth in the prohibition organization was the fact that there were now notices appearing which advertised public meetings at which prohibitionists were to speak. Twelve such meetings were held. Some growth in prohibition organization had occurred and it seemed to have partly arisen from the introduction of continued prohibition activity between polls. This is suggested by the fact that the Wanganui Prohibition League now had sufficient resources to organize local public meetings. It would seem, however, that this organization increased its activity prior to the poll. For example, on 8 October 1896 the Wanganui Chronicle printed a notice advertising a meeting of temperance supporters who were interested in prohibition. A small report was printed on this meeting which was described as a Local Temperance Convention "met to consider the principles and methods of the prohibition campaign".^{10.} The meeting was addressed by local speakers. Therefore, between 1894 and 1896, significant growth had occurred and this was confirmed by the number of small local meetings held. This growth was also shown when the no-license vote increased to more than three times the 1894 total. Finally, eighty per cent of those eligible to vote did so. This percentage suggests that the non-prohibition vote had also grown and this was verified by a report in an editorial which stated: "The opponents of prohibition were fully roused, making polling proportionally higher than in previous elections."^{11.} Thus the local prohibition organization now

10. WC, 14 October 1896.

11. WC, 9 December 1896.

had an active opposition.

From an analysis of prohibition notices in the Wanganui Chronicle for both 1899 and 1902, it would appear that the local prohibition organizations were somewhat quieter than they had been in 1896. During the period 1 September to 6 December 1899 only three outside prohibition speakers visited Wanganui. Moreover, only three notices appeared concerning public prohibition meetings, addressed by local speakers. One of these was the usual pre-poll convention of temperance workers and sympathizers to prepare for the local campaign. No editorials appeared in the Wanganui Chronicle before the poll, which was a departure from previous practice. Notices of meetings of the members of the Temperance Societies, the Prohibition League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union did appear, but from the relative lack of locally sponsored prohibition activity it would appear that local organizations were not particularly strong. This seemed especially true in the area of public education. This lack of strength was surprising for the Wanganui Herald was making increasingly strong attacks on prohibition and one would have thought that the local prohibition organizations would have tried more vigorously to have presented the opposite point of view in spite of their presumed weakness. For example the editor of the Wanganui Herald wrote:

Wanganui is at the present a prosperous and attractive town, the centre of much trade and industry, visitors enjoy the beauty of its scenery and find abundance of healthy amusement. Would this happy state of affairs continue under a regime of Prohibition? There can but be one answer - our bright attractive little town would be dull and lifeless, the new Opera House might as well be closed, people from the country who want a days outing would go elsewhere, shopkeepers would find business stagnating and tourists would leave Wanganui out of their programme.¹²

The year 1902 conforms to this picture, for there were only two outside speakers in the period from 1 September to 25 November 1902. There was only one notice of a locally convened public prohibition meeting, other than those

12. WH, 4 December 1899.

called for the visiting speakers. This meeting comprised a large gathering of members from churches and temperance organizations with the object of "gathering to consider the forthcoming poll and any suggestions concerning work for the poll".¹³ This lack of vigorous public activity, reflecting a possible lack of strength within the local prohibition movement, is also shown by a comparison of the results of the local option polls for 1899 and 1902.¹⁴ In comparison with the 1899 poll, the no-license vote for 1902 only increased by 105 votes and the reduction vote by 154. It is possible that these small increases were connected with the major alteration made to Wanganui's electoral boundary in 1902. As electoral boundaries and licensing districts corresponded, the removal of a large country section from the Wanganui electorate may well have affected the results. The votes for continuance showed a decline of 386 and even if a number of these votes went to no-license and reduction, and this is questionable, the overall impression was not one of strength. This helps to confirm the original hypothesis that the movement for prohibition was not very strong in Wanganui.

The year 1905 saw a small increase in the prohibition organizations' public activity as reported in the local newspapers. This was in spite of the fact that only two visiting speakers, J.G. Woolley and the Reverend L.M. Isitt, visited Wanganui during the period August to December. A new prohibition organization, the Wanganui Young Men's No-License Club, appeared and it seems to have been reasonably active. Furthermore during November at least six local prohibition meetings were held - the majority of them were open air meetings. Presumably, some kind of increase in strength and organizational capabilities must have occurred, not only to produce this open air activity but also to gain the large increase in the number of votes for prohibition, which amounted to 827. A large part of this increase must be attributed to the large increase of 31.62 per cent in the number of valid

13. WC, 29 October 1902.

14. See Table II.

votes cast in 1905. Finally the more favourable climate of opinion, then being built up for the prohibition cause throughout New Zealand, must be taken into account.

That the prohibition movement working in Wanganui would have in all likelihood built up a sizable body of supporters by 1908 is fairly probable, for there had been prohibition organizations actively in existence for at least twenty years. This fact combined with the more favourable climate of opinion in New Zealand generally may largely explain the results of Wanganui's local option poll in 1908. In this poll the number of no-license votes exceeded fifty per cent of all the valid votes and resulted in no proposal being carried.¹⁵ There was, however, some local prohibition activity in October and November. During this period two visiting speakers lectured and at least three other public prohibition meetings were advertised. The Wanganui Chronicle printed one short editorial prior to the taking of the poll, which reported that the no-license campaign, in Wanganui, was quiet.¹⁶ The Wanganui Herald also stated:

So far as the local option poll is concerned, the interest in Wanganui is nothing like so keen as in many other electorates in New Zealand, where it completely overshadows the political issues. It is unlikely that there will be any change in the status quo in this electorate.¹⁷

Therefore in the light of these reports it does not seem likely that the 1908 result was due entirely to the activity immediately prior to the local option poll, but rather to factors prevailing throughout New Zealand and also

15. According to the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act of 1895, if none of the proposals respecting licenses was carried by the prescribed majority, the licenses continued as they were until the next poll, subject nevertheless to the power of refusal to renew licenses objected to under subsections 1 - 4 inclusive of Section 81 of the principal Act and subject also to the provisions of the Licensing Act relating to forfeiture or increase of licenses. (The prescribed majority for continuance and reduction was an absolute majority of all the voters whose votes were recorded. For no-license it was three-fifths of all the voters whose votes were recorded.) For the number of votes recorded, see Table II.

16. WC, 16 November 1908.

17. WH, 16 November 1908.

to the accumulation of support in Wanganui over twenty years of activity. Furthermore, a slight alteration in the licensing and electoral boundaries may have had some influence on the result. (See maps.) Apart from the quietness of the campaign, the Wanganui Herald suggested that there was a further reason why the prohibition forces would not be successful.

It is to be found in the excellent reputation which the local hotels bear. In no part of New Zealand are the hotels more up-to-date and better conducted than in Wanganui and although it is impossible to deny that the No-License cause is advancing in the Dominion, probably the hotelkeepers of Wanganui will have a longer lease than most hotelkeepers in New Zealand, for the very reason that they carry on their business in so admirable a manner.¹⁸

The year 1911 presents something of a paradox. On the one hand the no-license voters came closer to victory, through the local option poll, than they had before or would again. On the other hand 1911 was a difficult year in which to gauge the strength of the local prohibition organizations, by using only newspaper evidence because little activity was reported. The Wanganui Chronicle for the period beginning 1 October and ending 7 December carried notices which advertised meetings for no less than seven visiting prohibition speakers. No public no-license meetings, addressed by local speakers, were advertised. The Wanganui Chronicle in an editorial stated: "... apart from ordinary tactics and from public meetings quietly conducted and attended by people of the same brand the prohibition party is fairly quiescent."¹⁹ In the absence of any other information to explain the high no-license vote in 1911, a passage from the same editorial is relevant and may provide a clue to understanding the local situation. The editor, referring to the nation-wide prohibition fervour said:

It is clearly the result of a tide of enthusiasm for a change in the conduct of the Trade, controlled very largely by the Brewers, which is sweeping over the land independent largely of local conditions or particular instances.²⁰

18. Ibid.

19. WC, 18 November 1911.

20. Ibid.

TABLE II

Voting on Liquor Issues 1894 to 1919

Results of the Local Option Poll in Wanganui 1894 to 1908

Year	No. on Roll	Publicans Licenses			Total No. of Persons who Voted			No. of Valid Votes	Results of Poll
		For Continuance	For Reduction	For No License	Men	Women	Total		
1894	3,980	1,301	114	610	1,357	722	2,079	1,982	Cont. Carried
1896	5,252	2,307	1,591	1,748	2,246	1,960	4,206	-	" "
1899	6,401	2,795	1,731	2,162	2,781	2,426	5,207	5,055	" "
1902	6,504	2,409	1,885	2,267	2,741	2,215	4,956	4,745	" "
1905	7,984	3,177	2,229	3,094	3,368	3,048	6,416	6,285	" "
1908	8,497	2,927	2,411	3,552	3,606	3,075	6,681	6,550	No Proposal Carried

Results of the Local and National Option Polls in Wanganui - 1911

Local Option Poll	1911	Nos. on Roll	No. of Voters who Recorded Valid Votes (includes informal)					No. Valid Votes Recorded
			Men	Women	Total	For Cont.	No License	
		8,871	3,962	3,756	7,718	3,574	3,625	7,199
National Option Poll	1911	8,871	3,962	3,756	7,718	Against National Prohibition	For National Prohibition	7,135
						2,945	4,208	

The editorial concluded by noting that much of the interest in New Zealand was in response to worldwide prohibition trends.

Finally the last three polls can be best examined together by way of a comparison. Each was surrounded by unique circumstances. The poll in 1914 was held after much agitation for the postponement of the general election and abandonment of the licensing poll. Cocker and Murray state:

This induced an uncertainty that had a disastrous effect on the Prohibition forces. When it was finally decided that the poll should be taken, there were so many new factors and so much disturbance and dissipation of energy that the result was disappointing.²¹

The unique situation of 1919 was that two polls were held in a single year, the second being dependent on the outcome of the first.²² It is difficult, using newspaper evidence, to gauge the effectiveness of local activity. Several outside speakers gave public addresses on each occasion, but there were virtually no references to activity by local speakers at meetings in the surrounding country areas as in previous years. It is possible to attribute this inactivity to the wartime situation and the result that it produced on everyday life, but it is equally possible that an increased reliance was placed on outside speakers. The newspapers, as well, were silent during the three campaigns and editorials were few in number. Thus it is difficult to form any judgement concerning the strength of the local organizations.

Therefore it would seem that prohibition in Wanganui had a nucleus of firm supporters that acted as a catalyst to influence a wider section of the community. Examples of such influence can be seen in the Temperance Conventions called prior to the polls in several of the earlier election years. The numerical strength of the prohibition organizations never seemed very large and it is probable that they relied, to a large degree, upon outside speakers to extend their sphere of influence. Finally, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, it seemed that the prohibition movement had generated its own momentum. As a result of this, the local foundations

21. Cocker and Murray, pp. 114-115.

22. See Chapter I page 7.

TABLE II continued

Results of the Option Polls in Wanganui in 1914 and 1919

1914	No. of Electors on Roll	Local Option			National Poll		
		Continuance	No License	Total Valid Votes	Continuance	Prohibition	Total Valid Votes
	9,344	4,331	3,308	7,639	3,777	3,906	7,683

1919 10 April	No. of Electors on Roll	National Poll		
		Continuance	No License	Total Valid Votes
	10,765	4,011	4,421	8,432

1919 17 December	No. of Electors on Roll	National Poll			No. of Valid Votes
		Nat.Cont.	State Purchase and Control	Prohibition	
	10,503	3,739	325	4,167	8,231

Notes:

+ In 1894 a person could vote on only one proposal. In the figures shown for that year a discrepancy appears between the total number of votes for Publicans' Licenses (totalling 2,025) and the total number of persons who voted (2,079). There seems to be no apparent explanation for this discrepancy apart from suggesting that there has been an error in the original compilation of these figures.

* From 1896 to 1908 a person could vote on one or two of the proposals presented and consequently there is a large difference between the total number of valid votes and the total number of persons who voted.

x In 1911 the option was reduced to two proposals and one could vote for only one in each poll. The Official New Zealand Year Book for 1912, however, records large differences between the total number of votes and the number of valid votes. Again there appears to be no apparent explanation but it is possible that the large number of invalid votes resulted from the changed nature of the poll.

did not have to be so laboriously relaid at the start of each new campaign as had been the case in the 1890's. A final conclusion, however, must be left until an examination of the local option polls is made.

The results of the local option polls for 1894 to 1919 are set out in Table II. First, it is interesting to note Wanganui's situation in comparison with other licensing districts. Until 1908 continuance was carried at every poll in Wanganui. In 1905, however, out of the sixty-eight licensing districts only eighteen carried continuance, while no-proposal was carried in forty. Therefore until 1908 Wanganui clearly lagged behind the leaders of the nationwide trend and this could well have been a reflection on the weakness of the local prohibition movement. In 1908 no proposal was carried in Wanganui and it became one of the thirty-four districts throughout New Zealand with this result. This decision was retained in 1911 but lost in 1914 when continuance was carried. By 1919 the local option poll had been abolished and only the national poll remained.

A detailed study of the local option poll can be made by establishing the number of votes that would have been needed to gain no-license in each of the polls. In 1894 Wanganui needed 566 more votes to carry no-license, 572 in 1896 and 859 in 1899. In 1902, 580 were needed, 677 in 1905, 378 in 1908, 675 in 1911 and 1,114 in 1914. The most striking feature that emerges from these figures is, that apart from 1908, the goal of prohibition remains a reasonably constant distance away from achievement, despite the fact that the total Wanganui prohibition vote increased. The prohibitionists in Wanganui were only just maintaining their support in the face of the rising number of voters in Wanganui. The 1911 and 1914 results suggest that even this growth was not being maintained. The two polls of 1919 are slightly different. The national poll held on 10 April had the majority necessary to carry no-license reduced from sixty per cent to fifty per cent of the total valid votes recorded. The result of this poll in Wanganui was a majority of 410 in favour of prohibition. The December poll also recorded a local

TABLE III

The Wanganui No-License Vote as a Percentage of the Total on the Roll

Local Option Poll	1894	15.33			
	1896	33.28			
	1899	33.78			
	1902	34.86			
	1905	38.75			
	1908	41.80			
	1911	40.86	National	47.44	
	1914	35.40	National	41.80	
National 10 April	1919	41.07	National	39.67	17 December 1919

majority of 428 for prohibition. Apart from the 1919 result, the overall picture drawn by these figures was that the prohibition movement in Wanganui does not appear to have been an organization that was winning a large number of people to its cause. In fact it only appeared to be maintaining its proportionate strength in the face of the rising population. This tends to confirm the conclusion arising out of the newspapers.

An interesting point emerges from a comparison of the local results for 1911 and 1914 and the national results for the same years. It can be seen that more people favoured national prohibition to local prohibition. The Wanganui Herald, in 1911, had an interesting comment on this situation.

One lesson is clear from the poll viz. that the people are not willing to trust to the local No-License when they have the opportunity of voting for National Prohibition, on account of the fact that those in some dry areas have only to go a short distance to secure all the liquor they require and thus an anomalous situation is created. On the other hand National Prohibition could be sure of a really effective trial..... 23.

There is one further way in which the local poll can be used to fill out the picture of prohibition activity in Wanganui. This is by examining the Wanganui no-license vote firstly as a percentage of the total number on the Wanganui roll and secondly as a percentage of the total vote cast. (See Tables III and IV.) From Table III it can be seen that the no-license vote was never in a majority of the number of potential votes on the roll. This adds further evidence to the fact that the prohibition movement in Wanganui was not very strong. Table III also suggests, as has been shown, that the prohibition cause faced strong opposition in the form of votes for continuance. Both newspapers acknowledged this fact. For example, in 1905 the editor of the Wanganui Herald when analysing the 1905 poll and predicting the future reported:

The result of the next election will depend to a great extent on the conduct of the Trade particularly the Hotels. Some Hotels are better conducted than before and this has led to an increase in the continuance vote. 24.

23. WH, 14 December 1911.
24. WH, 12 December 1905.

TABLE IV

The Wanganui No-License Vote as a Percentage of the Total Vote Cast

Local Option Poll	1894	31.09	
	1896	41.56	(No informal votes were recorded in the results of this poll. Therefore this percentage is higher than usual.)
	1899	42.77	
	1902	47.78	
	1905	49.23	
	1908	54.23	
	1911	50.35	National Poll 58.83
	1914	43.30	National Poll 50.84
<hr/>			
National 10 April	1919	52.43	
17 Dec.	1919	50.63	

Table IV gives a more detailed picture as it shows the number of Wanganui no-license votes as a percentage of the total Wanganui vote cast. This Table, in effect, measures the degree of dedication and determination of the no-license voters to record their votes. Therefore it is not surprising to find the percentages in Table IV considerably higher than in Table III and this is surely an indication of the seriousness with which prohibition supporters worked for their cause. But once again it shows clearly that it was not until 1908 that the fifty per cent mark was passed. Again the figures seem to suggest that the prohibition movement in Wanganui was not particularly strong. Finally one point that can be noted on both tables is the higher percentage in Wanganui for national prohibition.

It seems that the initial assertion that prohibition pressure in Wanganui was never particularly strong, in spite of the high percentage rate of drunkenness when compared with the national rate, remains tenable. While it must be conceded that a substantial number of Wanganui's citizens were prepared to vote for the prohibition cause, the goal of prohibition remained as far away as ever and the prohibition organizations were only just keeping abreast of the rising population, rather than increasing their support at a greater rate. The relative absence of overt controversy, notable in the small number of letters to the editors, also tends to confirm this view. In fact one wonders if the full page prohibition advertisements in the two local newspapers did not do more for prohibition in Wanganui than all the activity of the local prohibition organizations combined. Despite the higher percentage rate of drunkenness, there never seemed any real prospect that Wanganui would become a dry area.

CONCLUSION

The last twenty years of the nineteenth century saw a large upturn in the amount of legislation dealing with alcohol in general. It began in 1881 with the Licensing Act which was designed to codify and add to the limited and scattered provincial legislation that existed at that time. The Liberals came into power soon after and the 1890's and early 1900's were dotted with frequent amendments and new provisions. These concerned both the better regulations of liquor and the recognition that the public had a right to attempt to control the liquor trade through the ballot box. It would seem, as noted earlier, that this new legislation was an attempt to solve the problem of liquor abuse, which was one of a number of social problems that had caught the public's attention for the first time. Indeed it was only natural that a society faced with such an apparent dilemma would turn first to the Government with a demand for improvement through the raising of society's standards.

Yet it is at this stage that the first paradox, noted in this thesis, emerged. The problem at a national level was not nearly as serious as colonial society was led to imagine. Drunkenness convictions per thousand at a national level were not abnormally high and the percentage of New Zealand's population who were convicted for this offence was low. It is, however, during this period of the 1890's and early 1900's that a national prohibition movement was founded and began to wield an increasingly large and powerful influence.

The second basic paradox emerged when a case study of the same situation was made of Wanganui. Here there was a complete reversal of the national pattern. In Wanganui it was found that convictions as a percentage of the town's population and convictions per thousand, were both considerably higher

than the national rates. But prohibition organizations within Wanganui did not appear numerically strong or very influential. In fact an examination of the local option poll in Wanganui shows that Wanganui remained a fairly constant distance away from the goal of prohibition. Thus it appears that Wanganui's population refused to be aroused by the relatively large amount of observable drunkenness within the town. Yet at a national level, New Zealanders were prepared to be aroused over a problem that proportionally was smaller than that which existed in Wanganui.

This conclusion does help to confirm that earlier suggestion that New Zealand society over-reacted to the supposed magnitude of the drunkenness problem and were prepared to believe and act upon the broad and often gross generalizations and solutions proposed by national prohibition speakers. Such a conclusion poses inevitable questions and one that needs to be raised is whether the desire to eliminate the scourge of liquor abuse was so great that it caused many New Zealanders to temporarily abandon their rationality? On the other hand has hindsight merely allowed the historian to see that the rise in liquor abuse, at the turn of the century, was not to be sufficiently large as to turn New Zealand into the Alsatia of the Pacific or warrant the near-erection of a cordon sanitaire in 1919?

It must also be concluded that in Wanganui, at least, prohibition does not appear to have been a significant 'grassroots' movement. This can be seen by the lack of marked public enthusiasm for the cause and the lack of overt controversy as expressed through the small number of letters published in the newspapers. Usually it is assumed that prohibition was a widespread mass movement. If other local studies reached the same result it is possible that the prohibition movement might seem to be either highly centralized, or having only limited areas of strength.

Finally as has been shown by an analysis of the names and addresses of the numbers convicted, one of Wanganui's important functions was to act as a servicing/drinking centre. The town's servicing nature was significant as

it had important road, rail and sea routes with other parts of New Zealand and even with overseas ports. Therefore acting as an importing and exporting centre it is not surprising that many people passed through the town and that possibly a quarter of those convicted on drunkenness charges had out-of-town addresses.

One weakness of this thesis is that the material and the conclusions reached have not been able to be compared with any other local investigation into drunkenness and prohibition activity. This surely highlights the lack of, and the need for, more investigation into prohibition at the district level and it is only when this has been completed will the prohibition movement in Wanganui be seen in its true perspective.

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