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Another Opinion.

Editor Evening Telegram.

Dear Sir.—May I ask the courtesy of space in your columns to reply to the address of Dr. Blackall at the Casino Theatre on Friday last. Dr. Blackall is a B. A. of London University, has been for many years a teacher, and is now Supt. of Anglican Education for Newfoundland. Remembering, then, that he is a man of such great scholarly ability and experience, and that he holds such a responsible position in connection with the young life of the Colony, it is very surprising that he should give utterance to such foolish twaddle as he palmed off on the very gullible audience last Friday. Dr. Blackall well knows what fearful hindrances to educational work are the drinking habits of the parents, and I am all the more astonished to find him actually pleading for drink in the home, he, the one man whose duty it is to see to the removal of difficulties from the path of education, actually proposing to reintroduce that which has always been its greatest obstacle. And, forsooth, he pleads for it in the name of freedom, and he says, "The nation that tampers with the freedom of its citizens, sinks morally, physically and nationally." Let us see.

Was it not interference with the freedom of the citizens when years ago in England laws were passed (1) prohibiting the sending of little boys up house chimneys in order to clean them, (2) prohibiting the employment of women down mines, (3) shortening the hours, increasing the wages, and bettering the hygienic conditions in factories and workshops for those who were employed there? Did it not interfere with the freedom of the citizen slave-owner when slavery was abolished, or with that of the ship-owner when the Pillsoll line became law? And what about the Children's Charter, passed in England a few years ago, under which tobacco might not be sold to children under 16; children under the same age might not be taken inside the doors of a public house while the parents had a drink; and limits were set as regards ages and hours in which children might be sent on the streets to sell papers or do errands for tradesmen? Again, what about the sacred liberty of the subject when bye-laws were made preventing spitting in trams, buses, stations and even the public streets? And what of the interference with the freedom of the subject in laws relating to the sale of poisons and drugs and to the inspection of the food of the people?

Now, does Dr. Blackall know anything of all this? Why of course he does. He has read history and the story of social reform and economics, and he knows full well that the freedom about which he raved on Friday last is interfered with every day of our lives, whether we like it or not, in the interests of the whole community. No, it is not freedom that Dr. Blackall wants,—he has that already, just as far as the State thinks it wise to allow him.—It is license he is after, license to indulge in a habit which always degrades and never uplifts, which gives temporary merriment at the expense of real happiness, and a fleeting sensation of joy at the cost of the sacrifice of home comforts. "Oh, no!" and I see Dr. Blackall raise his hands in pious horror, "we only wish to enable reputable citizens to obtain periodically, by a rationing system, limited quantities of alcoholic beverages for their personal consumption." Why! has human nature altered? Does the same beverage have a different effect when taken in the home than in the saloon, and is it a fact that humans have so far conquered their desires that they can now take just so much and then stop? Or, rather, is this but the thin end of the wedge, the opening of the little door in the sluice gates, through which shall eventually rush that terrible stream of intemperance which shall overcome the young life of this Colony?

But again, Dr. Blackall says that drink means increased rather than decreased production, as so many employers of labor claim. Ah, let us see. Some eight years ago I spent a fortnight in West Hurtlepool, and a considerable part of my time was passed in the shipyards of Lord Furness there. The evidence of the manager of the blacksmithing department of those big yards was to the effect that their production was always kept down by the drinking habits of some of the employees. Again, why was it necessary to establish the Liquor Control Board to deal especially with the Carlisle District of munitions during the war? Only because the week-end drinking meant a loss of time and a shortage of munitions for our boys at the front. Go to any of the great leaders of industry, Lord Leverhulme, for instance, and their unanimous verdict always is that drink and decreased production always go together.

I regret very sincerely that one who belongs to my own profession, is a London B. A., and a Supt. of Education, should consider himself so little worthy as to appeal to the baser passions of those who are never prepared to forego appetite for the sake of humanity; but I regret still more that he should set the teachers and children whom he superintends such a deplorable example of great abilities misapplied, great opportunities neglected, and great ideals despised. Apologizing for intruding so much

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upon your valuable space, and with many thanks for your courtesy, I am,
Mr. Editor,
Yours faithfully,
T. F. BERESFORD.
82 Pennywell Road.

TO CORRESPONDENTS!
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