

Winemaker

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From the
Editor's
Chair . . .



" . . . The place to listen to a wine that has anything to say is the relaxed atmosphere of the dining room. And, unlike human beings, the wine that makes the longest after dinner speech is the most interesting."

Approach to Wine Tastings, Allan Sichel.

INQUITOUS TAX

This month's talking point is undoubtedly the penal and iniquitous tax imposed upon imported hops by the government of Southern Rhodesia—£10 per pound! Home brewers are thus faced with paying £2/17/6 for 4 oz. of hops if they wish to keep on brewing. Our past year is full of letters from various home brewers in Rhodesia (there are reckoned to be 500 in Salisbury alone and 1,500 throughout the Colony). Hops imported by commercial brewers are exempt. Home-brew thus can cost 1/6d. an imperial pint (previously it was 3d.), against the 1/9d. to 2/- an imperial pint of the commercial breweries (beer in Rhodesia is sold by the retail pint.) That the heavy tax is aimed directly at the hobby the Government does not deny. The Federal Minister of Finance has said that the duty had been imposed "because revenue from beer sales had not reached expectations." This, he said, was "due to the spread of home brewing, which is depriving the country of a considerable amount of revenue." It was considered necessary that home brewers should contribute to Government revenue in the same way as other consumers of beer.

UP IN ARMS

Home brewers, naturally, are up in arms, and the allegation is freely made that this tax has been imposed really as the result of effective lobbying by vested interests. 1,500 copies of a petition are being distributed in the Colony and home brewers are being urged to sign it and send it to their Member. It says: "I, the undersigned wish to register my protest at the unjust imposition of 3,333 per cent. on the import of hops for home brewing. I consider that the tax is unrealistic and is out of all proportion to the cost of the commodity involved.

"PENALISATION"

Further, I consider that the imposition of this duty means the penalisation of one section of the community to protect the vested interests of large monopolies. I therefore petition my representative in the Federal House to act on my behalf to obtain the favourable review of this duty."

A spokesman for the home brewers said that the increased duty was an "infringement of the fundamental right of individuals to do as they wish in their own homes."

SAVAGE

This savage tax has dismayed home brewers momentarily, but they are already casting about for means of circumventing it, by using some of the flavourings older than hops, or even by growing their own hops, as two of our correspondents mean to do. They asked for our help and suggestions and the obvious one was: Why not use hop extract, which is now readily purchasable? So far there is no tax on that and by the time there is perhaps their hop vines will be in production! Several firms now market a hop extract, which has merely to be added to the malt liquor before fermentation. The resultant beer is perhaps not quite so good as that made with fresh hops, but it needs a good beer palate, to tell the difference, and, when all's said and done, the extract method is even simpler than using natural hops.

CONFERENCE AT BRIGHTON

Arrangements are now well in hand for the 1963 National Conference and Show at Brighton this year (April 19 and 20). The Corn Exchange, a large and most impressive building, has been booked, and should give us even better accommodation than we had at Cheltenham last year. Friday (April 19) will see the staging of the exhibits and the erection of the trade displays, and the judging of the wine show will commence at 11.15 a.m., and go on all the afternoon. The show will open at 6.45 p.m., and an hour later will be visited by the Mayor of Brighton, Alderman W. H. G. Button, who will hold a civic reception, followed by a dance, buffet and wine party later. Saturday will see a programme consisting of "Winemaking in Pictures" (colour slides and films), a discussion on "How to Achieve Quality in Your Wine" between Mr. C. Austin, of Hertford, and Mr. John Parker, of Whitechurch, with Cdr. I. M. N. Mudie, of Andover, in the chair. There will be an official lunch and, in the afternoon, a talk on "Yeasts and What They Do" by Mr. J. A. Barnett, of King's College, Cambridge, and the annual general meeting. The final item on the "agenda" will be the presentation of trophies and awards. Going on all day will be demonstrations, a tombola, and "Judge with the Judges," in which you will be invited to try your hand at judging. In all, the programme looks promising, and all that is required now is a large entry in the wine show and a good attendance. Schedules will be available this month (from Mr. C. W. Martin, 78 Broomhill Road, Farnborough, Hants) and will be sent to Circle secretaries as soon as ready.

STEWARDS WANTED

Incidentally, a few more stewards are required for the judging on Friday, April 19, and anyone who would care to volunteer for this interesting experience should write to the Chief Judge, Mr. S. W. Andrews, 6 Tamworth Road, Hertford, Herts.

Inquiries about accommodation, incidentally, should go to: Mr. E. A. Hawkins, Hollingbury, Hove.

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