

THE LITERARY DIGEST

for May 26, 1916

Nation-Wide Prohibition as a War-Measure

THE STORY OF PROHIBITION IN STATES DRY FOR
AT LEAST A YEAR TOLD BY THEIR NEWSPAPERS

ONE PRIME MEASURE OF DEFENSE adopted by various belligerent nations since the earliest days of the war is control of the drink problem. The good results of this policy have been praised continuously in the press of these countries and are cited here by prohibition advocates to explain the great strides of the "dry" movement in the United States during the past two years. A writer in the *New York Sun* quotes Mr. Lloyd George as giving utterance early last year to this statement: "We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Drink; and, as far as I can see, the greatest of these deadly foes is Drink. If we are to settle with German militarism we must first of all settle with Drink." Besides the obvious point of seeking to restrain the use of intoxicants for the improvement of national efficiency, as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* notes, control of alcohol is needed because it is a war-necessity. The making of modern explosives requires enormous quantities of it, and to limit drinking is to conserve the supply of this war-necessity. Moreover, this journal reminds us that much of the raw material used in intoxicants is foodstuffs, the supply of which, according to statistics, is no more than sufficient for the world's present uses until another harvest. All the grain used in the manufacture of beer or whisky is taken from the supply of cereals needed for breadstuffs, and *The Post-Intelligencer* recurs to the high importance of the limitation of the use of alcohol by individuals, "because it makes for higher efficiency and adapts them better for the service of the State, whether in camp as soldiers, in the munitions-plants, or as workers in the field gathering for the country its necessary supply of food."

Hardly had a state of war between the United States and Germany been declared than a prohibition offensive was launched from many and various quarters. Col. Theodore Roosevelt is reported in the press as saying before the members of the Long Island Farmers' Club and the Long Island Food Reserve Battalion, at Mineola, L. I., that he feels personally "we should urge that grain be not diverted from food into intoxicants. In this war many nations in Europe have exercised rigid control over the grain-production. It would be a fine idea for us to follow their lead." In addressing Cornell University students at a meeting of the Intercollegiate Prohibition Association, William Jennings Bryan is reported as avowing that "there is no such thing as pacifism now," and his argument for prohibition is that this country needs young men with "clear and quick-thinking brains, men with steady nerves and muscles."

Washington dispatches inform us that Herbert C. Hoover advocated prohibition as a war-measure before the Senate Agricultural Committee and that Secretary of Agriculture Houston, in submitting to the Senate a plan for stimulating food-production, cited the example of the European nations which have secured a considerable addition to the food-supply either by reducing the production of malt liquors or by reducing or prohibiting the production of distilled liquors. In the United States, the Secretary says, the value of food-materials used annually in the manufacture of intoxicating liquors is \$154,000,000. A solution of the food-problem proposed by Governor Lynn J. Frazier, of North Dakota, the farmer Governor who was elected by 80,000 farmers of the Non-Partizan League of that State, involves the elimination of the grain and live-stock combinations and the middleman, and the extension of rural credits. Moreover, he is quoted by the *New York Evening Post* as saying, "another specific thing that would affect our food-supply and our purchasing-power is prohibition for the nation."

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Governor Capper, of Kansas, according to Topeka dispatches, entreats President Wilson to recommend to Congress that the waste of grains and other foodstuffs in the manufacture of alcoholic drinks be prohibited immediately. Governor Capper also sent letters to the Governors of all other States asking them to make a similar plea to the President and to encourage Senators and Congressmen from their States to support the plan, and he is quoted in his telegram to the President as saying—"All Kansas regards this as an imperative war-measure from an economic and patriotic standpoint, leaving out moral aspects." A patriotic appeal is made by the prohibition organ, *The American Issue*, which says that the men who indulge in intoxicating liquor, even when they assume that it does them no real harm, should at this time abstain, because they "spend great sums and waste many valuable hours" that might be put to vastly better use. This journal mentions the entire congregation of a conservative Church in an Eastern State that has volunteered to omit all intoxicants during the war-period, and points to this as an example which should be emulated.

Washington dispatches inform us that plans to preserve for food purposes possibly 20,000,000 bushels of grain, now used annually for distilled spirits, and for increasing Government



**"YOU ARE ACCUSED OF WASTING THE
GRAIN-SUPPLY OF THE UNITED STATES!"**

—Cesare in the *New York Evening Post*.

revenues \$35,000,000 a year have been laid before a Senate committee by the National Distillers and Wholesale Liquor-Dealers' Association. The plan provides for taxes on grain, molasses, and the material entering into the manufacture of distilled spirits when in the distillers' hands. This would cut down production and force into consumption spirits now in existence, according to the representatives of the organization, who told the committee that between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 bushels of grain and between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 gallons of molasses would be saved.

The action of the United States Brewers' Association in placing itself at the service of the President and pledging its members to any necessary national work in prosecuting the war against Germany, the press inform us, is characterized as "sublime sarcasm and colossal effrontery" by the Rev. Dr.

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"AND NOW HE'S COMING OVER HERE!"

—Ireland in the *Columbus Dispatch*.

Ferdinand C. Iglehart, of the Antisaloon League, in his report to the Temperance Committee of a Methodist annual conference. Dr. Iglehart is quoted as suggesting that the brewers "make good their offer of service to this country by closing their institutions at once and turning them into mills where grain may be ground into food instead of being rotted into poison." That the liquor interests are in a mood of preparedness for the prohibition offensive we learn from *The Wall Street Journal*, in a statement of Mr. Alvin Krech, chairman of the Distillers Securities Corporation, who at their annual meeting said, among other things, that prohibition legislation would, of course, have an effect on the valuation of the companies' assets. While admitting to the stockholders that national prohibition is a possibility, Mr. Charles Kessler, another member of the Board of Directors, thought national prohibition a possibility, but did not consider it a probability. The "bone-dry" law, which becomes effective in July, he thought, might easily prove a blessing in disguise, for it was expected in the trade that many States now "dry" might next fall go wet if the provisions of the "bone-dry" law are strictly enforced. Mr. Kessler pointed out that it would be difficult for the prohibitionists to win the remaining "wet" States, as these are the big industrial centers, and he said further that all the Southern States, which have always been favorable to prohibition on account of the negro population, and the Western States, on account of their populist tendencies, represent a comparatively easy field for backers of the prohibition movement. *The Wall Street Journal* tells us, moreover, that:

"A significant part of Mr. Kessler's remarks was the statement that the Distillers Securities Corporation, at a very small cost, could convert its grain-distilleries into distilleries adapted for the manufacture of denatured alcohol from molasses, thus enabling direct competition with the United States Industrial Alcohol Company. He said that with molasses selling at seven cents a gallon and corn at sixty cents a bushel the advantage was with the Distillers Company in the manufacture of denatured alcohol against the United States Industrial Alcohol Company. He said that at a cost of less than \$10,000 he could convert one of his grain-distilleries into a molasses-distillery and make 7,000,000 gallons of denatured alcohol a year."

Another indication of the feeling of the liquor interests is found in newspaper advertisements of the National Association of Distillers and Wholesale Dealers, which is said to comprise 80 per cent. of the distillers and allied interests of the United

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States. In these advertisements we are reminded that the annual revenue paid the Government by the liquor industry "exceeds the total annual interest on the new \$7,000,000,000 war-loan." Moreover, there are now stored in Government bonded warehouses more than 211,000,000 gallons of whisky and other spirits, and distillers have given bonds to the Government for more than \$232,000,000 for payment of taxes on these goods. Prohibition would "confiscate" not only the millions lawfully invested in distillery property, but also the millions of gallons stored in bonded warehouses and would "confiscate bonds to the extent of \$232,000,000—an amount greatly in excess of the total capital and surplus of all the bonding companies in America, so that the Government would lose \$232,000,000 taxes." It is pointed out also that the Constitution of the United States guarantees that private property shall not be taken or destroyed for the public good without due compensation to owners, and we read:

"Prohibition is alleged to be for the public good. Prohibition as now proposed is ruthless confiscation. From every standpoint of American justice, should not the cost be borne by the Government—State or National—decreeing it? Confiscation without compensation is un-American and contrary to the Constitution of the United States.

"The liquor industry has paid to date over six billion dollars



"SHERMAN WAS RIGHT!"

—Sykes in the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger*.

in taxes to the Federal Government, and is now paying nearly \$1,000,000 per day.

"We ask a just and equitable consideration of the economic, moral, and financial problems of proposed prohibition."

While impressed with the gravity of the food-problem, the *Cincinnati Times-Star* "does not believe that what might be called the net consumption of grain in breweries and distilleries is large enough to justify under present conditions the closing of these concerns with all the disturbance to industrial and financial conditions which this would entail."

The effects of war-time prohibition in Europe have impelled THE LITERARY DIGEST to find out just what Americans have experienced under peace-prohibition by making a strictly impartial inquiry in all the States that have had prohibition laws of one kind or another in operation for not less than one year. Two questions were asked of editors in these commonwealths—First, whether in their State prohibition is a success, and, secondly, whether they would recommend it to other

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States. From nineteen States 157 replies were received, and those in the affirmative are for the most part enthusiastic in tone, while not a few of those frankly cynical concede that drink is an evil, but question whether prohibition as enacted and enforced is the necessary corrective. Zealous supporters of the "bone-dry" law see in the successful working out of such legislation the gradual conquest of State after State until the entire nation shall be dry. On the other hand, those who scoff at State-wide prohibition do so because they do not believe it can be effective unless the "dry" laws apply without distinction to all the States. The good reports given of "dry" legislation are radiant with rejoicing over new and better homes for working-men, better clothes and more happiness for their wives and children, better business for the merchant, and better collections, more deposits in the savings-banks, and, in general, a striking advance in the social, moral, and economic life of the community.

The objectors to State-wide prohibition, especially when it permits a limited importation of intoxicants from another State by an individual shipper, say that this kind of prohibition does not prohibit. In some Southern States the drinking is said to be much worse than formerly, and we hear of rustic communities that have made appeal to have the express station removed because the negroes and the poor whites so abuse the exemption of the law permitting the importation of intoxicants. This kind of prohibition, too, it is alleged, has raised a guerrilla army of bootleggers in the States, and it seems that in the South in particular the moonshiner is a factor in the problem not easily curbed or eliminated. Another criticism of the no-saloon law form of prohibition is that while it prevents the poor man from getting what he wants to drink, it permits him to get something that is very much worse than honest whisky at an extortionate price. But the rich man or the man well-to-do finds no difficulty in securing as good drinks as drinkers in wet States. A more insidious effect, however, in the view of some opponents of the no-saloon form of prohibition is that children see their parents drinking at home, and while these boys and girls are removed from the lure and temptations of the "gilded café" they are exposed to the subtler appeal of the "speak-easy," with its suggestion of adventure and derring-do.

But the Webb-Kenyon Law decision, say advocates of prohibition, makes it possible for each State to keep liquor beyond the boundaries, and, besides, through the passage of the Reed amendment to the Postal Appropriation Bill, States are enabled to enact laws making themselves "bone dry." Still, we read in the *New York Evening Post* a letter from the Rev. J. Lester Sellers, in which he says that the Webb-Kenyon Law "can not possibly work to the satisfaction of true prohibitionists," for while common carriers may be stopt from taking consignments for States where shipping of liquor is prohibited, that "instrument of the devil—the automobile—will be at the service of the liquor men, even as it is at the service of the white-slaver and the escaping thief." The automobile as a liquor-carrier is foreseen also by some of our editorial informants in the South, and it is pointed out by others that such an evasion of the law is just one more proof of the absolute impossibility of legislating for the public good.

In listing the editorial opinions from the various States which have experienced the working out of "dry" laws, we have grouped them according to the following table, from which it will be seen what a speeding up there has been in the prohibition movement in later years, for, to quote the *Washington Star*, "the Prohibition party has found its principles so widely indorsed that it may be compelled to look for a new political issue."

(Continued on the next page)

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PROHIBITION'S SPREAD IN SIXTY YEARS

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|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Maine, 1851 | | Kansas, 1880 |
| | North Dakota, 1890 | |
| | 1908 | |
| Georgia | | Oklahoma |
| | 1909 | |
| Mississippi | North Carolina | Tennessee |
| | 1914 | |
| | West Virginia | |
| | 1915 | |
| Alabama | Arizona | Virginia |
| | 1916 | |
| Arkansas | Colorado | Idaho |
| Oregon | South Carolina | Iowa Washington |

MAINE (1851)

In Maine, the patriarch of prohibition States, we are reminded by the *Portland Express* that the so-called "Maine Law," which prohibited traffic in liquor, was enacted in 1851 after years of agitation by Neal Dow and others. Tho the legislature which adopted the statute was controlled by the Democratic party and the Governor who approved it was also a Democrat, party lines were ignored in the passage of the bill. That the people found the law good, according to this journal, is proved by the fact that of the 94,000 votes cast at the election following, 72,000 were given for three candidates for governor who indorsed the law and about 22,000 for a candidate who opposed it. The moral and material result of prohibition was so obvious that several States followed the example of Maine and threw off the "incubus of a traffic which heavily handicapped the progress of society." Nevertheless, some of these States soon "fell back into the license column," but since 1851, except for an interregnum of two years (1856 and 1857), during which license prevailed "through a trick," Maine has clung to prohibition. *The Express* admits that the law has not been vigorously enforced at all times and among all classes, but at no time anywhere in the State have derelictions in this particular resulted in as bad conditions as follow upon license. The untoward conditions resulting through official neglect have been magnified, we are told, and Maine has been a target for misrepresentation and abuse by the opponents of prohibition. Especially has this been the case within the past few years, and it is described as part of the organized effort to sweep back the rising tide of prohibition in the nation. This journal informs us also that since Maine has had prohibition twenty-seven different men have been elected as governors of the State and of this number twenty-two in one form or another have manifested their approval of the statute, and it adds:

"A fair test of the general prosperity of a people is found in the per capita amount of individual deposits in their banks and in the increase in the value of all taxable property. Wisconsin, Delaware, Ohio, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania would not be cited by any intelligent citizen as States where the general prosperity of the people had suffered through legal opposition to the liquor traffic. How do they compare with Maine in the amount of per capita individual deposits in their banks? The controller's report for 1910 shows that Wisconsin had \$142 per capita; Delaware, \$170; Ohio, \$175; Illinois, \$198; New Jersey, \$205; Maryland, \$205; Pennsylvania, \$210; while Maine had \$256 per capita of individual deposits in all her banks. Prohibition was enacted in Maine, as we have seen, in 1851, and between 1850 and 1912 as shown by the census of 1910, Maine had increased the value of her taxable property of all kinds by a larger percentage than had any State whose shores are washed by the waters of the Atlantic or the Gulf of Mexico, save only the Empire State of

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New York, and that great State exceeded Maine by only eight one hundredths of 1 per cent."

Another enthusiastic supporter of prohibition in Maine is the *Augusta Kennebec Journal*, which admits that while the law has not been enforced as it ought to be enforced, yet points out that no law wholly prevents crime, for "murders go on, as does arson, and quarantine laws are evaded while officers look another way." Yet even in times when the political enemies of the law were in power and nullifications of the law were as flagrant as "the worst in our worst cities desired, the traffic was still an outlaw, discredited." A great fact about prohibition, despite these conditions, is that in the large area of Maine's rural districts the law has "fulfilled its high purpose in a degree that is admirable beyond measure," and, now, since the ruling of the Supreme Court on the Webb-Kenyon Law, this journal rejoices to note that the Interstate Commerce "farce" protecting original packages to any point in Maine can no longer prevail. We read then:

"We advise other States to adopt our law, with improvements against weak and nullifying officials, because every State added helps us, and because our religious, educational, business, and social life is more wholesome and progressive under it; because the opposition of the liquor interests has aroused the people to study the liquor-traffic problem, and to study means understanding of and hatred for the conscienceless methods of a damnable business."

According to the *Bath Daily Times*, the best evidence of the success of Maine prohibition is the refusal of the people a few years ago, when the opportunity was afforded, to substitute a local-option plan for State-wide prohibition. At that time neither money nor effort was spared by the liquor interests outside the State, we are told, or by their Maine partizans and friends. Moreover, the increasing favorable sentiment was evidenced last fall by the election of a Governor and legislature pledged to use all their power for a more thorough enforcement of the law, and a present movement to place all sheriffs and county attorneys under the authority of the prohibition Governor, and *The Times* goes on to say:

"Bath has discovered under a régime of thorough and unremitting enforcement that real prohibition is for the benefit of the community. Merchants lose less from bad bills and gain more from increased sales. The streets are free from intoxicated men. Crimes, both great and petty, have decreased. The youth are protected. Prohibition has been a success."

The *Lewiston Journal* recalls that for three generations Maine has been a storm-center of debate and legislation concerning the drink problem, and tells us that the people there began with "moral enthusiasm" against drink because of the "obvious curses" of the saloon. Moral enthusiasm went into cold storage more than a generation ago, but into the vacuum rushed conviction that the penalties drink imposes on the economic life are such as to demand prohibition as a cold business proposition. In the judgment of this journal, despite intermittent nullification of prohibition through the cooperation of political adventurers in collusion with the rum-shop, the State has gained a great deal. That no statutes in restraint of crime

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THOU SHALT NOT
EAT, DRINK, SMOKE, READ, CHEW, ENJOY,
SMILE, LAUGH, WRITE, CREATE;
THOU SHALT DO
ONLY THAT WHICH IS PRESCRIBED
BY LAW.



THE NEW TEN COMMANDMENTS.

—Plaschke in the *Louisville Times*.

are ever completely successful is also remarked by the *Skowhegan Independent Reporter*, which says it has "ceased to expect that the evils of drink will be entirely abated in our day, yet does consider that legal enactments, and prominent among them the Maine law," will be among the most important agencies to the end desired. The editor of *The Maine Farmer* (Augusta) notes that the opposition to Governor Milliken's radical temperance policy has raised the cry that the summer travel business in Maine will be killed if more stringent laws are enacted, or those already existent are more rigidly enforced. If liquor-drinkers are the people on whom we must depend for our summer-travel business, says this observer, then the sooner we lose it the better for the young people of Maine.

(The Rest of the Article is Available Upon Request)

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