

## WILSON AND WINE

**V**ERY UNBECOMING FOR AN ELDER in the Presbyterian Church, and for a man holding so high an office as that of President of the United States," declares the Rev. Dr. W. W. Hindman, of Columbus, Ohio, is President Wilson's recommendation to Congress that it repeal that part of the war-time prohibition law relating to light wines and beers; and the same sentiment in different words finds expression in a resolution passed in St. Louis by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and cabled to "Elder Wilson" in Paris. The Prohibition forces generally are shocked, of course, by the President's proposal, and declare their intention of fighting it in both houses. But the "wets," while approving, are not jubilant. For they point out that such a repeal would only postpone the national drought from July 1 of this year, when the war-time measure goes into effect, to January 16 of next year, when prohibition by Constitutional amendment becomes operative. And even within this brief time-limit, complains the Association Opposed to National Prohibition, the President's proposal is unsatisfactory, because while coming to the rescue of producers and sellers of wine and beer it fails to offer any consolation to those employed in all other lines of the liquor business. In a statement issued from its New York office this organization says:

"Why play any favorites? There is not a single good reason why a single word of the act of November 21, 1918, should remain on the statute-books of the United States, because the sole reason for the operation of the act stated in it was 'conserving the man-power of the nation and to increase efficiency in the production of arms, munitions, ships, food, and clothing for the Army and Navy.' As there is no longer any need for such conservation and efficiency, so there is no need of any statute to promote either."

From the other camp comes a reminder by William H. Anderson, New York State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, that "the President signed this bill to be effective until demobilization is completed, and if it is complete he does not need any help from Congress to open the saloons." Mr. Anderson, whose organization is regarded by the "wets" as the chief factor in all their recent defeats, goes on to blame Mr. Samuel Gompers and Mr. Joseph P. Tumulty, the President's secretary, for the President's present attitude. He suggests also that it is an attempt to "pass the buck to the Republican party." The *New York Tribune* quotes him as saying:

"We are not much surprized at the President's advocacy of the repeal of war-time prohibition against beer and wine. After the return of Samuel Gompers, who has used his peculiar influence to deceive the President in behalf of the brewers, it is not surprizing that the brewers received some assurance. The wets were unable to keep from talking about it.

"We were informed some time ago that Mr. Tumulty, the President's secretary, friend of the wets, was recently in New York at a secret meeting of some of the big hotel men, and that he assured them in substance that the President would do everything possible to help them. . . . .

"This looks like an attempt to pass the buck to the Republican party and use Congress as the goat in a series of experiments to determine whether it is politically safe for the

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President himself later to use the power which this act confers upon him.

"This apparent yielding to the intimidation tactics of Mr. Gompers in behalf of the brewery workers, but done in the name of all American labor, will merely intensify instead of relieve the difficulty when the country comes up against the prohibition amendment on January 16, which neither the President nor Congress can abrogate.

"The success of the German brewers in breaking down a prohibition act of Congress will embolden them to go still further in their threats of revolution and disorder in case an enforcement law is passed to carry into effect the amendment."

"The President has been staying in Paris too long," says Congressman Randall, of California, who was elected on a prohibition ticket; and he adds: "Congress will not repeal war-time prohibition." "To repeal war-time prohibition now



is like giving a half-cured drug fiend opium for a few months," remarks Congressman Little, Republican, of Kansas. And in a Washington dispatch to the *New York Times* (Dem.) we read that even "Republicans of the conservative type who deprecated both war-time and Constitutional prohibition" regard the President's recommendation as "merely an attempt to win the approval of one element in the community, and hold that the Republican party's position before the public would be strengthened if it went on record against lifting the ban." "Virtually every one concedes that the drys' have a large majority in each house and do not intend to permit any change in the law," reports the Washington correspondent of the *New York Tribune* (Rep.). The *New York Evening*

*Post* (Ind.) points to the fact that two-thirds of the members of the new Congress are from dry districts, and that prohibitionists everywhere will fight the proposed repeal as "an entering wedge of the wets, which, if successful, might lead to further efforts to circumvent national prohibition." "There is not the slightest chance that the law providing for war-time prohibition will be repealed," declares the Washington correspondent of the *New York Evening Mail* (Rep.).

On the other hand, Edward I. Hannah, president of the Central Federated Union of New York, assures the press that "organized labor is in entire accord with President Wilson when he opens the fight to restore freedom for the American people in regard to the consumption of light wines and beer"; and the *New York Morning Telegraph* (Dem.) thinks that the President's course in this matter means that "he has heard the voice of the American people in his far-away-Paris temporary residence." The proposed compromise on war-time prohibition, the same paper adds, may prepare the way for a similar softening of the terms of Constitutional prohibition.

In making this unexpected recommendation in his opening message to the special session of the Sixty-sixth Congress, the President offered this explanation:

"The demobilization of the military forces of the country has progressed to such a point that it seems to me entirely safe now to remove the ban upon the manufacture and sale of wines and beers, but I am advised that without further legislation I have not the legal authority to remove the present restrictions."