

The Good and the Bad of the Beer Flood

NO RIOTOUS CELEBRATIONS, no 'moaning at the bar,' no drunkards prone in gutters." "In short," adds the Cincinnati *Times-Star*, "beer has been accepted as one of the amenities of life that should never have been taken away."

Similarly appreciative views are expressed in other States where the amber flood has been gushing since April 7. The only trouble seems to be in supplying the demand, as brewers push their plants twenty-four hours a day in the hope of averting a threatened shortage.

Wets are naturally jubilant over the reception beer has received, and the dries, if they hope to get any ammunition out of it, seem content to save their fire for the major battle of repeal.

But a note of alarm creeps in as the country settles down to the new order—the racketeer.

"In the mad rush to put legalized beer on the market, under the Government's policy of 'liberality' in the issuance of brewing permits," says the United Press, "gangsters and racketeers have 'muscle in' on the new business, and today constitute a threat to orderly administration of the law."

Hi-jacking of legal beer in transit also is reported in many parts of the country.

But war on the racketeer is to be pushed vigorously. In New York State Commissioner Mulrooney of the State Beer Control Board serves notice that he will not be tolerated. Even if he obtains a Federal permit, he will be barred by the State.

As the novelty of beer wore off, observers began checking the principal results of the flood, and they have dug up some interesting facts.

LARGE increases in government revenue and a decrease in drunkenness marked the first full week in which the sale of 3.2 beer was legal," says the *New York Times*. It canvassed a dozen cities in a country-wide survey.

Four million dollars was received by the Government in barrel taxes and licenses, says the Associated Press, and municipalities also profited handsomely. New York took in \$450,000 and Chicago, \$480,000.

"New York City brewers," we read, "put upward of 2,500 men back on jobs; Chicago, 2,000; Milwaukee, 2,500; Pittsburgh, 2,500.

"Elsewhere throughout the land brewers reported more than 10,000 men had been taken from the ranks of unemployed to supply the demand for the newly-legalized beverage, while the estimate of those obtaining employment in other lines as a direct result of 3.2 beer, ran into the tens of thousands. Railroads quickly felt the increase in commerce."

"The return of beer has really been a remarkable phenomenon," says the *New York Evening Post*. "Not one of the bad effects predicted for it actually took place."

The psychological effect, asserts the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, "has been most fortunate."

"Taking it all in all, it is a long time since these United States have been as happy," says the *Providence News-Tribune*: "The whole atmosphere of the country has been more wholesome."

LITERARY

DIGEST

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