

Legislation Convincing Business Honesty is Best and Profitable

[George McAneny, President of the Board of Aldermen of New York City, in the New York World.]

The most striking characteristic of American legislation during the past 20 years is the extent to which it has swung away from the old plan of conferring privileges and immunities in the interest of private profit to the new plan of imposing duties and responsibilities in the interest of the public welfare.

A few people, no doubt, look back with regret to the days when it was easy, or often easy, by means of money judiciously expended, to secure the passage of laws which placed the public at the mercy of any band of unscrupulous men which was prepared to corrupt a legislature in order that it might swindle a community.

The ancient alliance between dishonest business and dishonest politics found its broadest field of activity in matters concerning transportation, lighting and insurance, and it was in this field that public indignation achieved its earliest and most brilliant victories when it addressed itself to the task of obtaining relief from an intolerable oppression.

Public Must Not Be Exploited

It was no more than natural that those who were personally interested in preserving the old order of things should have made every effort to prevent the spread of a doctrine which announced as its cardinal principle that, from the standpoint of the greatest good for the greatest number, business should be conducted from higher considerations than those of mere profit. But these efforts were in vain; and we have seen put in force, through federal, state and municipal regulation, a supervision over commerce and industry which gives effect to a deep seated public conviction that the people of a free country are not fit subjects for

A FABLE

The man was very sick. He feared his time had come. "Doctor," said he, "give me of your medicine that I may get well."

"No medicine of mine," replied the doctor, "can do you good. There is something on your mind that causes you to worry and fret your life away." The man sighed. "Yes, you speak truly. I am anxious and troubled for the future of my wife and small children. Who will care for them if I do not recover?"

The man had forgotten his life insurance policy for the time, but it had been a mute witness to his suffering and his speech. It whispered to him: "Cease tossing about, worry no more, and get well; but, if you do not, remember that I will care for your dear ones. This is my province and my delight."

After hearing this, peace came to the man. He gained in strength and courage and became well in body and mind.

"A wonderful recovery," said the doctor.

"A very natural one," said the insurance policy.

Moral: Insure your life if you want to live long.

THE MIDWEST LIFE
OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA
A STOCK COMPANY SELLING
GUARANTEED COST LIFE INSURANCE

unrestricted exploitation for the purpose of private gain.

I have no doubt whatever that, compared with the general conditions which prevailed 10 years ago, American business is more honest, more efficient and more law abiding, and that the vast majority of business men have not only resigned themselves to a sane and moderate regulation, but have come round to the view that if the nation's prosperity is to rest upon solid foundations the profits of capital must go hand in hand with a square deal to labor and a square deal to the public.

Why Not Pure Clothes?

If a man were to go to Albany and conduct a campaign against the passage of a law forbidding theft or manslaughter he would bring down upon himself the scorn and ridicule of the whole community. He would be compelled to face the clear implication that he wished to be free to rob or kill of it suited him.

Yet a number of interested corporations and individuals are not ashamed to come out in the open and oppose the passage of laws which declare that when you take pay for a pound of butter you must deliver a pound of butter, that when you label a bottle "grain alcohol" it shall not contain wood alcohol, that when you advertise a sale of pure woolen clothing you must not give your customer a shoddy suit of cotton goods.

Profits That Are Immoral

The most important aspect of this question is that which relates to the public health. No argument is needed to prove that it is grossly immoral for manufacturers or retailers to make a profit out of adulterating food with injurious substances, or by putting on the market imitations or inferior forms of drugs used in filling physicians' prescriptions.

What is not generally realized is the serious menace which such practices constitute to the health of the community, altogether apart from the suffering which they inflict upon the individual.

The country is spending millions of dollars a year of federal, state and municipal revenue on measures of sanitation and the prevention of disease. The efficacy of these measures is threatened when people are unable to get wholesome and nourishing food and when the drugs which are employed to combat ill health are so impure that they do not possess the qualities which justified their use.

The Square Deal in Markets

In view of the fact that every person who sells anything for cash is protected by the most stringent laws against having false money paid to him it would seem to be eminently fair that the purchaser should be protected against having false weight given to him.

Reputable merchants and storekeepers who serve the well-to-do part of our population can not be justly accused of the general practice of making use of the light weight and short measures, but among the small dealers who cater to the needs of the poorer classes this kind of petty swindling has been far too common.

The Brightening Outlook

It is comforting to reflect that in spite of all obstacles the movement for a sane control of trade in the interest of the general welfare has been steadily successful.

The violence of opposition has abated; the forces of reform, gaining one point here and another there, have pushed their firing line

always a little farther into the enemy's territory. If we still witness from time to time an outburst of hostility against the spirit of fair play in trade we are impressed rather by the vast numbers who approve in silence rather than by the few who voice their reactionary sentiments from the housetops.

An encouraging sign of the times is to be found in the fact that many persons affected by regulative legislation have begun by making gloomy prophecies that they would be driven out of business and have ended by accepting regulation as being of actual benefit to them.

THE WORLD AND THE WATER WAGON

(William Allen White, Editor and Author, in Boston Advertiser)

A curious thing is this world-wide agitation against the sale of alcoholic liquors; Russia stops the sale of vodka; Germany restricts the manufacture of beer; France shuts down on the sale of absinthe, and England seriously considers the prohibition of all liquor traffic. These are some of the larger manifestations of the movement against drinking. But in every country the ban of insurance companies is put upon the drinking man. The railroad employe all over the civilized world today, must be so nearly a teetotaler that the old glad life of unrestricted booze-fighting passed from him forever. The coming of steam and electricity has done many things to change the face of civilization, but by speeding up machinery, steam and electricity have changed the face of the skilled laborer more than anything else. They have bleached him out. The hard drinker can't hold his job in any factory today where efficiency methods are used.

As men in the machine rooms have had to stop drinking, the increased speed they have generated has compelled a faster race in the office. Office men all over the world are dropping liquor. Ten years ago bad form consisted in carrying too much liquor into the day's work at the office. Twenty years ago, bad form expressed itself in being drunk during working hours. Fifty years ago a protracted spree was frowned upon. But today the man who breezes into the office after lunch with the aroma of a beer or a cocktail about him, is viewed with suspicion, if not with alarm. Personal liberty is getting more of a jolt from the customs of civilization than it is from the laws in the local option and the prohibition states. For as a matter of fact, the law merely follows public opinion. The change in the constitution of a state comes only after the habits of a considerable minority—if not a majority—have changed.

It is not prohibitory law that is closing the breweries so much as it is the wise little man in the factory and in the office who quietly decides, without putting on a parade after his decision, that he will cut out the booze. When he and his neighbors meet to talk it over, the town goes dry, and the state, when enough counties are dry, itself moves out of the wet column. And the liquor dealers' association views with alarm, and blames its troubles upon the prohibition cranks. They are glad of the honor conferred. But they really don't deserve it.

For the liquor dealers themselves are largely to blame for the wave of teetotalism that is sweeping the world. The liquor dealer has organized his business upon a wrong basis. He is trying to sell his products through the saloon. And the saloon as a sales agency is all bad. It is bad, because of two things: First, because it is run on a theory of over-stimulating the consumption of the product, and over-stimulation of the

sale, is the one thing which produces the evil of drink; and the second fault of the saloon comes from the fact that in every American community at least, the saloon is hooked up with vice and corruption. A mighty organized civilization will not permit a man to over-drink. And a decent community sooner or later will rebel against any institution within its borders which is allied with the gambler, the prostitute and the election thief. And always the saloon tries to make men drink too much, and then tries to hold its place in the community by an alliance with vice. So men quit drinking, and they vote against the saloon as the first step in self-defense and civic righteousness.

Every election sees the dry territory widening. The saloon fight is a lost cause. Only one thing can save the liquor traffic in this world, and that is the liquor traffic itself. It must cease being a hog. It must put itself upon a status where decent men can defend it. And decent men can not defend the saloon as it stands today. Doubtless if sugar dealers were to go into a sales agency which would try to make people eat vastly too much candy and then would ally itself with touts and gamblers and prostitutes in every town to hold its rights to make people consume too much sugar, the sugar business would fall into disrepute. And the liquor business will find itself fighting a hopeless fight until it abolishes the saloon, puts itself upon the basis of any other commodity—as say clothespins, mackerel, dress goods, or nails; and instead of trying to over-stimulate its sales through the saloon, take its chances over the counter with the rest of the world's goods, and get out of politics.

BOOZE "GOT" FAMOUS INVENTOR

Charles R. Richards, once a widely known inventor, but now broken down and destitute, pleaded guilty the other day in the court of special sessions to a charge of petit larceny and received a suspended sentence. Justices O'Keefe, Fleming and Freschi, when they heard the story of the man's life, gave him money to return to his old home in North Adams, Mass.

Probation Officer Russell, who had charge of the case, surprised the justices when he told them Richards was at one time one of the most widely known electricians in the country, the inventor of electrical appliances and an associate of Thomas A. Edison. In 1880 he went to Europe for Mr. Edison and studied the inventions of the pioneer electricians.

He perfected the duplex system for the telegraph, by which two messages could be sent on one wire at the same time. This work was accomplished in the Edison laboratories at Menlo park in 1883. Richards was the first to start a movement to place electric wires in underground conduits, and conducted the first experiments in Chicago.

Richards succumbed to the influences of whisky and three months ago left North Adams, where he had wealthy relatives, and came to this city. A few days ago he was arrested when trying to sell a telephone receiver, valued at \$40 by the New York Telephone Company, to a junk dealer. The telephone, the probation officer said, was stolen by the old man with the hope that he could raise money for liquor.—New York Sun.

About the time a fellow gets his creditors stood off until next month the first looms up over the horizon.—Nashville Banner.

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