

Harding Wet

Harding voted for submission (and for enforcement), but in speaking on submission (see statement in Congressional Record, August 1, 1917) he said:

"The thought I have in mind, Mr. President, is the elimination of this unending prohibition contest in the Halls of Congress. At the same time, I AM IN SYMPATHY WITH THE OPPOSITION TO THE RESOLUTION ABOUT THE UNFAIRNESS OF ADOPTING A FEDERAL AMENDMENT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION ON A QUESTION RELATING TO PERSONAL LIBERTY, and if there were any other method of submitting an amendment I should be very glad to employ it.

"I AM NOT A PROHIBITIONIST, MR. PRESIDENT, AND NEVER HAVE PRETENDED TO BE. I do claim to be a temperance man. I do not approach this question from a moral viewpoint, BECAUSE I AM UNABLE TO SEE IT AS A GREAT MORAL QUESTION. I can remember very distinctly when I was a boy, during the early days of a hardy rural citizenship in Ohio, some of the most moral people the state boasted had a jug of whisky in the fence corner during the harvest time. I am not saying that I favor that. I only cite it as an instance that it is not always and invariably a moral question.

"But I do see the ethical and economic side of it, and when it comes to decision on this point, at a time when we are boasting of our warfare for popular government, I can not be inconsistent enough to deny the settlement of this much mooted question by popular will in the only manner in which the constitution provides.

"I DO THINK IT IS UNWISE, IMPRUDENT AND INCONSIDERATE TO FORCE THE ISSUE AT THIS TIME. I do not question the sincerity or the high purpose of the prohibition forces, but I do believe, and very sincerely, that it is a great misfortune to the country to divide American citizenship into two hostile camps over this question of personal liberty at a time when we ought to be promoting the concord of citizenship that is essential to win the war. But having expressed myself as regretting the pressure brought to settle this issue now, I must go further and say that since it is insistent and intruding, so that we must reach a decision now, I find myself impelled to take the side which I think must in the end contribute to the most good of our common people.

"I DO NOT THINK A PROHIBITION AMENDMENT WILL BE EFFECTIVE, Mr. President. You can not make any law stronger than the public sentiment which sees to its enforcement. I have watched the progress of this question from the conflict in the hamlet to the municipality, to the county, the state, and the nation, and while I stand here and freely express my doubts about its practicability, at the same time I recognize that it is growing and insistent and persistent and must be settled.

"Ever since I have been in public life in a small way I have seen men continually measured by the wet and dry yardstick, and the submission of this amendment is going to measure every candidate for public office by the same wet and dry yardstick until the final settlement. When I say that, I have expressed my strongest reason for putting a limitation upon the pendency of the amendment. I want to see this question settled, I want to take it out of the Halls of Congress and refer it to the people who must make the ultimate decision. I want to meet the demand for submission and witness a decision.

"So, then, in spite of its untimeliness, in spite of the lack of prudence in submitting it now, since we have come to this question of prohibition as a war measure, and there has been a yielding on the one hand against drastic prohibition in the food bill, I think this submission is a sort of compromise between the contending forces, and I am willing to be counted a compromising agent. All our great movements are the result of just such endeavors. I DO NOT HESITATE TO SAY THAT I APPROACH THE QUESTION FROM A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE AND IF THIS AMENDMENT IS SUBMITTED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND RECEIVES THE SANCTION OF THREE-FOURTHS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES THEN, IF MY TENURE OF OFFICE STILL OBTAINS, I AM WILLING TO GO FURTHER AND JOIN IN A MOVEMENT TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE THROUGH A PROCESS OF

COMPENSATION TO THE BUSINESS DESTROYED.

"So, then Mr. President, in these rather rambling remarks which I have made, rather than turning to some written ones I wished to offer, I will say that I should like to see this amendment adopted, because it accomplishes one great thing. It forces this great public question to final settlement within the period of six years. We shall have the question acutely presented until it has been finally disposed of within that time. I am sure that after we have disposed of it, we shall find national legislative and state legislative duties adjusted to much more normal lines.

"I hope the judgment of the Senate will be such that it will agree to this limitation amendment. I know there are arguments against the constitutionality of such a course, but there can be no argument offered that will question the validity of the amendment if it is adopted within the time prescribed."

PLATFORM PLANKS

The National Board of Farm organizations at the Republican national convention at Chicago, June, 1920, urged that the following planks be embodied in the Republican platform:

"1. We recognize agriculture as the fundamental industry, and we pledge ourselves to give it practical and adequate representation in the CABINET and in the appointment of governmental officials, and of commissions on a bi-partisan basis.

"2. We pledge to all farmers the full, free and unquestioned right of co-operative marketing of their farm products and purchase of their supplies and protection against discrimination.

"3. We pledge effective national control over the packers and all other great interstate combinations of capital engaged for profit in the manufacturing, transportation, and distribution of food and other farm products, and farm supplies.

"4. We pledge legislation that will effectively check and reduce the growth and evils of farm tenancy. We pledge the perpetuation and strengthening of the FEDERAL FARM LOAN SYSTEM the improvement of facilities for loans on farm commodities and the inauguration of a system for co-operative personal credit that will enable farmers to secure short-time credit on more favorable terms.

"5. We pledge comprehensive studies of farm production costs, at home and abroad, and the uncensored publication of facts found in such studies.

"6. We pledge ourselves to accord agriculture the same consideration in tariff legislation as is accorded to other interests.

ADDITIONAL PLANKS

"1. We pledge ourselves to the conservation of coal, oil, water power and other natural resources in the public interests, and to their distribution without discrimination against farmers, and especially to put an end to the devastation of our commercial timber lands.

"2. We pledge the repeal of laws restricting the rights of free speech, free press, and peaceable assemblage, and we pledge the restoration to the people of these fundamental rights.

"3. We are opposed to any form of compulsory military training in time of peace.

"4. We pledge our support to graduated income and excess profit taxes, supplemented by a graduated inheritance tax to furnish the additional revenue needed to meet the cost of the war.

"5. We pledge our support to stringent immigration laws and especially oppose the admission of Oriental labor.

"6. We pledge ourselves to maintain that parity between money and commodities which will liquidate our national obligations on the basis of money value at the time incurred."

(Editor's Note—The above appeal fell on deaf ears.)

THE HOOVER LETTER

Mr. Hoover writes a very sensible letter to the Hoover club of Oregon. It will be found on another page. He protests against the extreme position taken by Johnson on one side and the President on the other, and points out the wisdom of a middle course, namely, ratification with such reservations as have been agreed upon. His Republican partisanship leads him to ignore the fact that 23 Democratic friends of the league voted with 34 Republican friends of the league to ratify with reservations. He ought not to overlook these patriotic Democrats.

Prohibition Endorsement Defeated

The Fate of the Dry Plank at the Republican National Convention

Clinton N. Howard, prohibition orator of Rochester, New York, with credentials from the National Reform association, The International Reform Bureau, and the World Dry Federation, including the Federal Council of Churches, representing all told more than 20,000,000 constituents, came to the National Republican convention to secure a platform declaration in support of National prohibition. He filed his credentials with the Committee on Resolutions, was given a hearing in support of the Eighteenth amendment, and its effective enforcement and presented a suggested plank to the committee.

The sub-committee composed of 13 members succeeded in inserting a plank which pledged the Republican party to the support of the constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors "as it shall be interpreted by the Supreme Court." This plank Mr. Howard sought to have amended by striking out "as shall be," but the entire plank was dropped in the Committee of the Whole under the dictation of Senator Reed Smoot, who told Mr. Howard that the dry issue would not be mentioned at all, immediately prior to the final session. This information was confirmed by a later statement from Senator Borah who emerged from the committee room.

There was no way of getting information to or from the committee as the guard was instructed to prevent any information passing the door. Mr. Howard, succeeded in running the blockade by dropping into the lobby of the Auditorium Hotel where the committee was sitting and sending a telegram to a prominent dry member of the committee deputizing him to represent the dry constituency and framing a resolution to offer as a substitute in the event that the sub-committee report was turned down. This substitute resolution was presented upon the defeat of the original report and obtained only three votes in the committee. When this report was brought out to Mr. Howard he induced the dry member of the committee to sign the resolution in the form of a minority report. The member himself would not agree to present it to the convention. He said he would give his proxy to the dry governor of his state or any other prominent leader who would introduce it and make the fight.

The governor was seen and declined on the ground that it might injure the chances of his candidate before the convention. Taking a taxicab, Mr. Howard rushed to the convention hall a mile distant, was passed to the main floor by showing his credentials at the door, and conferred with dry leaders in several state delegations while the majority report was being read. He was unable, however, to prevail upon any delegate to present the minority report, though it in no other respect changed the platform finally adopted. The prohibition question was eliminated entirely. Mr. Howard still retains the signed minority report covering the dry plank which was as follows:

"The Republican party, always the party of the constitution, obedience to law and the promoter of public order, pledges itself to sustain and uphold the constitution as amended by the American people in the exercise of their power by the adoption of the 18th Amendment, as construed and upheld by the Supreme Court's decision. We accept the verdict as the fixed policy of the American people and pledge the party if successful in the election, to a policy of loyalty to law and to enact or continue such legislation as will make effective the 18th Amendment to the constitution."

The dries ought to take ex-Governor O'Neal to San Francisco and exhibit him as a warning. The convention could look upon him in his crippled condition and get some idea of the fate of a Democratic presidential candidate running on a wine and beer platform.