

pressing an opinion on the subject. I refused to let anybody know where I stood or what I thought, and yet, the question was so much an issue then that the brewers of Omaha had sent a republican lobbyist down to Lincoln to tell democrats how to vote in the legislature on this subject. If it was not an issue then, why had the liquor interests gone from place to place and pledged men to vote against county option? They had made it an issue before I knew anything about it or expressed an opinion. Not only that, but Douglas county declared against county option last summer before I had expressed an opinion on the subject. Do not accuse me of bringing this question into politics; I met an issue after it had been introduced, and if I have any apologies to offer, I shall not offer them to the liquor interests for speaking now; I shall offer them to the fathers and mothers of this state for not speaking sooner. If I am to blame at all, it is for keeping silent when they had more reason to ask me to speak, than the brewers have to expect me to keep silent at this time.

But even after I had expressed an opinion on this subject, I did not at once decide to make an active fight. I dreaded, as I have never dreaded anything before, entering a discussion where I might find myself out of harmony with these men whom I have loved and with whom I have worked all these years. Not until I came home from a trip to South America, arriving here in April, did I decide what I would do. When I reached home I learned what was being done; I found that the liquor interests of the nation had entered Nebraska politics, and that the liquor interests of the nation were joined with the brewers of Omaha, for I received the information from one who talked with both. They were banded together to select the senators in this state that they might block legislation that was unfavorable to them. I satisfied myself that the other special interests were allied with the brewery interests, and that they were about to burglarize the state of Nebraska and that they intended to use the democratic party as the tool with which to break into the state house. What could I do but give the alarm? I acted as I would if I saw a man attempting to burglarize the house of a neighbor. You may not believe me, or if you do, you may be indifferent, but I shall warn you that the conspiracy is going on.

But, they ask, why not be content with a declaration in favor of the initiative and referendum? I tried my best to get the initiative and referendum in the last legislature; I not only made a speech before the senate and house but I went personally and solicited men whom I knew to vote for it. They told me that the liquor interests were against it; they gave as their reason for voting against it that their people were afraid that if we secured the initiative and referendum county option would be submitted and that they opposed the initiative as a means of defeating county option. I warned them that the liquor interests had enough to do to take care of the saloon business, that it was not their duty to legislate or to run the state of Nebraska. I reminded them that the initiative and referendum did not deal with this one question alone, but with all questions; that it was first embodied in our platform fourteen years ago when the liquor question was not before this state. But they would not listen to argument and they defeated the initiative and referendum. We had the governor on our side, we have an overwhelming majority of the democrats on our side in the house, and a majority of the democrats in the senate, but there were nine democrats in the senate who would not join with the rest, and they are to blame for the fact that we have not the initiative and referendum as our paramount state issue this year. I want you to know upon whom to place the blame. I object to having democrats lay it at my door when I endeavored to give you a means of submitting this question that would have avoided the necessity of bringing it up at this time, but the legislature adjourned and nothing was done. The democratic party was denied the splendid advantage we would have derived from submitting the initiative and referendum to the people. Our party was denied the advantage of that issue in this campaign. Democrats, do you feel no resentment towards the liquor interests that for money only were willing to prevent our party from going before the people of this state with a proposition so in harmony with popular government?

I was not willing to stop there; when I found it was necessary to make a fight in this state, I decided to try once more, and so I wrote the members of the legislature and asked them if

they would agree to vote for the initiative and referendum at a special session. I had no authority, and republicans said I was trying to help the democratic party out of the hole; that I was trying to get rid of an issue that was embarrassing, trying to fight the campaign on national issues, and why not? We have a senator to elect, why not elect him on national issues? We have six congressmen to elect, why not elect them on national issues? I made one more effort to get county option out of the way, and I came so near—nineteen senators pledged—that if one of these senators who refused to vote aye, had joined the nineteen we would have had the necessary twenty in the senate. Who has tried to save the party from this issue? I made this fight to get a special session, and had I had the support that I had a right to expect from the leaders, we would have had the special session and would be out fighting for the initiative and referendum, and county option would not have troubled us in this convention. Do not blame me, blame the men who after the democratic state convention of 1909 had declared for the initiative and referendum still refuse to promise to vote for it. And why? Because of the opposition of liquor interests in their districts. And these men are here today, nearly every one of them delegates to this convention and coming from counties which with one exception, did not indorse the initiative and referendum. You ask me why I do not trust a platform promise in favor of the initiative and referendum now? Because I will not trust any man who is under secret promise to the liquor interests, no matter what he promises in his platform. It has been said by the opponents of county option that a county option plank in the state platform will not bind a man in a district that is opposed to county option. If that be true, then who says that a plank in favor of the initiative and referendum will bind a man in a district where his people are against it? If these men would not vote for the initiative and referendum after their party had declared for it last year, what assurance have we that they will vote for it this year? Did not democrats in Colorado refuse to vote for the initiative and referendum although it was in their platform? In Minnesota, also, the democrats declared for it in their platform, but some democrats voted against it in the legislature. I was not willing to go out and promise the people that it would be done next year unless this convention would sever the tie that binds it to the liquor interests. News has come this afternoon that the republicans have declared for the initiative and referendum in their state convention, and that the populists have also declared for it. Are you glad?

(Cries of yes, yes, no.)

Why do you not applaud? You ought to applaud, because that is the only way we have a chance of getting it. If we had to depend on democrats alone we would never get it as long as they march behind the brewers. I am glad because I think that with all parties for it, the liquor interests will not be able to get enough legislators to violate their pledges to defeat it. Who made county option the paramount issue in this state? Do you say I did? You flatter me. I appreciate it, but I can not accept the compliment. Did I make the republican party declare for county option at Lincoln? If so, I had more influence with the republican party than I seem to have with the democratic party. Did I make the populists declare for county option? If so, let me thank the populists for being nearer to me than the democrats are. I did not make the republican party do this; I foresaw that they would do it. I did not make the populists do it; they did it two years ago, before I expressed an opinion on the subject. Who forced this issue? Your liquor dealers, they made county option paramount. How? By telling us that we could not have self-government as long as the fear of county option stood in the way, and so the people said: "If we can not govern ourselves until we get it out of the way, then we will act upon it at once so we can proceed with other things." As a result of their stupid opposition the liquor interests will probably have county option two years sooner than they would have had it if they had not prevented the submission of the initiative and referendum. Had we succeeded in submitting the initiative and referendum, it could not have been voted upon until next November, and then county option could not have been submitted under the initiative and referendum until two years from next November. If the legislature this year gives you statutory county option, a committee

ought to be appointed to thank the brewers for advancing temperance legislation in this state. These are the men who made it the paramount issue, and now let us meet the issue that they have made paramount.

Sometimes you read in the papers that this question is not acute. There is one peculiarity about it: it is only acute on one side. The men opposed to county option can not understand why anybody wants it, but they can understand why every person who is opposed to it should leave the democratic party if the party declares for it. Did you ever know a question so one-sided? I affirm that county option is a democratic proposition; I refuse to go to the brewers to learn either constitutional law or the principles of the democratic party. Do you doubt that this state can vote on the liquor question, do you doubt that a city can vote on the liquor question? Of course you do not. Why can not a county, larger than a city, but smaller than a state, vote on the liquor question? Is it democratic for a state to vote on it, and democratic for a town to vote on it, but undemocratic for a county to vote on it? Who will say so? You can not find an argument that can be made against county option from a democratic standpoint. Either a majority of the county or the minority will rule. And who says it is democratic to have a minority decide what ought to be done in a county against the protest of the majority? If you desire democratic authority consider the states that have county option. Texas, that gave me my largest majority in three campaigns—Texas has it. Is it undemocratic? If so, why did Texas adopt it? Missouri has it. Is Missouri democracy a kind that you can sneer at? It is true they exempt towns of a certain size, but remember Missouri has the county unit. Ohio has it, too, and I remind you that Ohio has large cities. I do not want to hurt the pride of Omaha, and yet there are several cities in Ohio as large as Omaha. Cincinnati, Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Youngstown, Springfield, not all these are as large as Omaha, but of considerable size. There are a great many of these cities and yet they have county option. Tell me you can not have county option where Germans are numerous? Do they not have Germans in Ohio? Is there any state that has more Germans? Is there any city other than Milwaukee more known as a German city than Cincinnati? And yet they not only have county option, but the democratic convention that met the other day did not dare condemn it. It has been adopted in more than half the counties. I know Germans who are not interested in the saloon question beyond all other questions. Four German ministers worked for the closing of every saloon in the city of Lincoln, and I have talked with Germans who feel as much interest in protecting the young men of their neighborhood from these men traps as any other American. We have no German saloons in this state or nation. Ask the German who has come from the fatherland and he will tell you that the German saloon is different from ours—there is no treating there, and there ought to be none here. The largest German society in the United States has declared against treating. We have a statute against it, and yet it is violated in nearly every saloon in this state. Give us the German saloon and then it will be time to say that the Germans are from tradition opposed to the regulation of this traffic. County option is not undemocratic; the time has come when you will have to stop saying that it is undemocratic to do anything distasteful against the liquor interests. A man can be a democrat in good standing without staggering when he walks. The republicans used to question a man's democracy if he did not drink. A brewer in Chicago called me a degenerate because I am a teetotaler. I contend that I can be a good democrat and yet refuse to put a glass to my lips or to set an example which might lead my neighbor to ruin. No, you can not say it is undemocratic to favor legislation on this subject. Democratic states have not only adopted county option, but they have adopted state prohibition.

It is said that county option is unfair because, if the county goes dry all the saloons are closed up, but if it goes wet you can still have prohibition in the towns and villages. That argument is entirely unsound. Did not this state go wet twenty years ago? And did not this state, when it went wet, still have prohibition in every town that wanted it? Why did not the liquor interests demand that, because it went wet there should be no prohibition anywhere? If it had gone dry, there would have been no saloons anywhere. We have a situation in this state that is similar to the situation under coun-