

was then proposed, declaring beer not to be an intoxicant in the meaning of the prohibition clause of the constitution, the object, of course, being apparent; that is to say, to exempt beer and all malt liquors from the prohibitive effect of the amendment. That proposed modification was repudiated by both the great parties and rejected by the people by a majority, as I recall, of about 85,000. If it is true that in politics we recognize and act upon the things which leads to success, the highest possible tribute that can be paid to the result of prohibition in the state from which I hail is shown and reflected in the action of the two great political parties of the state.

DENVER BENEFITED

Of course, in the great cities there is always a larger proportion of antiprohibitionists than are found in the rural and remote districts. I think that may be accepted as a generally true statement, except in mining communities. Hence the city of Denver, like other great cities, was at all times the state stronghold of the "wets." Whenever the prohibition question was submitted to a vote of the people its opponents could confidently rely upon the overwhelming adverse majority of cities like Denver and Pueblo, whatever the result in the outside counties might be. This is reflected in the vote of Denver since 1910, at which time that city voted "wet" by a majority of 17,000, in 1912 by 22,000, in 1914 by 8,500, in 1915, upon a so-called home-rule amendment, by 3,500; but in 1916 the majority vote of the city and county of Denver against the so-called "wet" amendment was 10,960. In the state the majority against prohibition in 1912 was 40,000; the majority for the amendment in 1914 was 11,500; the majority for prohibition in 1916 was 85,789.

Mr. President, I can perhaps summarize what I have to say regarding specific evidences of benefit to our state, and thereby impose myself for a briefer space upon the senate, by quoting from an article upon the subject published in one of the papers of my city during the present month, the 12th day of December, and which is the summary of what I am told was a careful ascertainment of the actual facts, so that they could be properly and truthfully presented for consideration. I give these statistics by reading into the record the statement of the paper itself:

"Taxes have decreased.
"Finances of the municipality never were so good."

The license taxes which the city of Denver relied upon very largely for its revenues, and which, I think, constituted far more than one-third of its actual revenues, of course now have to be supplied elsewhere, and they have come from two directions—partly in the increase of taxation through the raising of rates, but more largely through the decrease of expenses, consequently perhaps upon other reasons than prohibition, but due, nevertheless, to something, and coincident with the period of time during which prohibition has been in effect.

"Business is better than it ever has been."

There is a sign in my city over the entrance to one of the most extravagantly decorated saloons of the old era. It reads: "Buy shoes instead of Booze." It is filled with a stock of shoes. None of the ornamental fixtures had been removed,

and they were crowded with merchandise, which attracts by the novelty of its display.

"Every man who wants work can get it.

"There are fewer vacant houses and stores than ever before.

"Building permits, especially for the last six months, show a decided gain, particularly in the matter of small homes.

"Collections are 40 per cent better.

"Savings accounts in Denver banks have broken all records.

"Hotels, whose proprietors predicted they would be driven out of business within three months, are planning extensions, and two new million-dollar hosteleries are assured within a year.

"Divorce suits filed show a decrease of 40 per cent.

"Arrests, for all causes," of course this is within the city, "have decreased 31 per cent.

"Arrests for drunkenness have decreased 59 per cent.

"Arrests for vagrancy have decreased 55 per cent.

"The cost of maintaining the city jail has decreased 28 per cent.

"The cost of maintaining the county jail has fallen 27 per cent.

"The number of murders, suicides and burglaries has fallen off at an astonishing rate. There have been only two murders in Denver in 1916."

Prior to that time, Mr. President, the number of tragedies of that sort occurring in my city was far greater than I would care to acknowledge.

"One of these was clearly a case of self-defense against a demented man that the jury reached a verdict of not guilty in less than 20 minutes. The other case has not come to trial. At least a dozen murders a year formerly was Denver's average.

"Police Chief Hamilton Armstrong says crime is decreasing at a phenomenal rate. He attributes this to prohibition.

"District Attorney John A. Rush stated in open court recently that the work of his office has decreased 50 per cent since the city went dry.

"Every newspaper in Denver has cut its staff of police reporters from one-half to two-thirds.

NOT SO MANY PRISONERS

"The State penitentiary has one-fourth fewer prisoners than formerly, and about February 1 will close one whole wing of its chain of buildings."

Then follow statistics showing that some 317 persons have been arrested for what is popularly known as "bootlegging."

It is said that an attempt has been made to discredit these figures, and that corrections have been sent broadcast throughout the United States in bulletins—

"In which official reports of Frederick R. Knight, police court clerk, were so cleverly garbled that the casual reader got the impression arrests for drunkenness had increased heavily under prohibition.

"Just before Denver went dry saloon interests predicted that property occupied by saloons would remain vacant, as the locations were fit for nothing but saloons; that saloon men, brewery workers, and others dependent upon the liquor trade would move away from Colorado, causing houses to become empty and real estate values to depreciate; that ice plants, which were supposed to rely upon the saloons as their best customers, would reduce their output at least

50 per cent, consequently laying off many workmen; that merchants in every line would encounter the worst times in the history of the city; that taxes would be heavily increased to make up the loss of the \$341,000 annually paid by saloons in licenses."

Then follows a statement of what has actually happened, to which I have already adverted, but which I think will perhaps bear repetition:

"The best of the saloon locations were rented even before the bars moved out. Proprietors of other businesses had their fixtures built in advance; saloons closed and moved out Saturday night; new concerns installed fixtures and stock Sunday, and opened for business Monday.

INCREASED BUSINESS

"Merchants in all lines are commenting on the increased business during 1916. Their customers pay their bills promptly, they say. Denver is not a manufacturing city and therefore is not affected by any abnormal increase in business that can be attributed to the war.

"Nearly every big merchant tells of accounts owing so long he had 'written them off the books'; since the saloons close! the men who owed these bills have drifted, unsolicited, into the stores and commenced to pay up on the installment plan.

"The Denver Gas & Electric Light Co., which serves as something of a barometer for financial conditions in the city, reports its collections are 40 per cent better since prohibition."

While at home I discussed this subject, Mr. President, with several leading business men of my city whom I knew to be opposed to prohibition in 1914. With one exception, all these gentlemen informed me that they had been agreeably disappointed as to the practical suits of prohibition in the city and county of Denver; that their business had increased; that payments were made more regularly and more promptly; and one of them emphasized the fact that the accounts in the savings banks had practically doubled in number, and, if I remember rightly, in amount as well.

As a man who once opposed prohibition, and who feared that some of the evil consequences predicted of its adoption might be verified, I am obliged in the face of these conditions to announce a change of view, and assert that if the experience of my own state for this short time are a standard, instead of injuring in any way—materially, morally, industrially, or economically, even temporarily—the interests of a great city, its progress and its growth, those interests and progress and growth will be accelerated, and accelerated along lines that must commend themselves to every man who believes that civilization, comfort, and prosperity are essential to human happiness.

Mr. President, I do not pretend to believe that prohibition or any other change as the result of legislation can bring about that perfection in human affairs for which we should all strive, but which we can never hope to reach. I do not regard it as a panacea for all human ills, nor, as I have said, as something which will expel the drink habit from the habitations of mankind. But that the abolition of the saloon is one of the things which from a moral and practical standpoint is desirable I believe is established

and demonstrated not alone by the experiences to which I have adverted in my own state but by those of every other state where the system has been tried.

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