

Brewers Levy on Merchants for Dry Fight

[From the New York Sun, Jan. 23, 1917.]

The spectre of national prohibition hovering closer each year over the United States has spurred the big brewers to undertake a new campaign of education, the details of which came to light yesterday. This time the bills will be footed not by the brewers themselves but by the firms with whom they deal. Back of the movement is the United Brewers Association, which has its headquarters at 50 Union Square.

Already the plan has been tried on a small scale in the west, and it worked so admirably that it was formally adopted by the national association, and will be put in operation throughout the United States. It is now in operation in New York, also in Jersey City.

The brewers are holding back a small percentage on each bill they pay, affixing stamps to cover the amount withheld. The stamps are issued in different denominations by the National Association of Commerce and Labor of Chicago, and the money raised in this way is sent to that association to be used for educational purposes, such as engaging speakers and issuing and distributing literature showing the menace of nationwide prohibition that really prohibits.

Purpose of the System

The purpose of this novel system, according to Hugh F. Fox, secretary of the United States Brewers Association, is threefold. The raising of money and the great campaign against prohibition are but secondary purposes. The underlying principle of the whole scheme is to make missionaries in the cause against prohibition of the firms allied with the brewers, the firms that sell hops to the brewers, or malt or bottles.

Although the brewer pays a stamp tax to the government for the privilege of selling the goods he manufactures, Mr. Fox pointed out, the man who sells malt to the brewer, whose entire business depends upon the brewer, has heretofore paid no part of this tax. It is mainly to make such allied firms feel the force of this tax and to enlist them in the cause against prohibition as allies of the brewers that the campaign is conducted in this way.

Will Reach Other Firms

At first only the industries closely allied with the brewing industry are to be taxed, but gradually the system will be extended to include all of the firms with whom the brewers deal. The tax rate is based on a sliding scale carefully worked out. In each case the percentage will be very small. The rate on hops, for instance, is fixed at five cents a bale. Hops are selling now at about \$30 a bale. The rate for malt is 1-8 of a cent a bushel. In some cases the rate is as high as 1 per cent.

Here is a case in point. A supply house sold recently to one of the large New York breweries \$108 worth of truck parts. When the check came from the brewery in payment it was made out for \$106.92 and there was enclosed in the envelope \$1.08 worth of the stamps. The brewers recognize that they have no power to force any firm to accept a cut in the amount of a bill as rendered, but so far they have

found that the firms with whom they deal were glad to co-operate.

Purpose of the Fund

"We are affixing to your invoice stamps of the National Association of Commerce and Labor and making deduction from your bill. We are taking this action upon the assumption that your own business interests make you wholly or partly concerned in the welfare of such of your customers as would be affected by national prohibition. We further believe that you are willing to aid in protecting our property and industry from confiscation and destruction without compensation.

"The amount of this deduction is small, and will be remitted by us to the above named association when adjusting our stamps account with it. While this contribution aids us indirectly, it also directly serves to insure the continuance of your own business either in full or in part. All funds so received are expended by this association in an educational campaign in the various states against sumptuary and compulsory prohibitory laws. We assume that our action will have your approval; if we are mistaken advise us at once and we will remit to you the amount of the deduction."

The National Association of Commerce and Labor, the sole function of which is to sell the stamps to the brewers and spend the money for the campaign of education, was organized three years ago. The firms that supply articles that the brewer uses have three representatives on the finance committee, and the United States Brewers Association also has three representatives. By this means both sides have a voice in the manner in which the money shall be spent.

RESOLUTIONS

Following are resolutions adopted at a mass meeting held in Minneapolis, Minn.:

"We, American citizens, assembled in mass meeting at the call of the mayor of Minneapolis, beg to address the President and congress of the United States, as follows:

"1. We appreciate the difficulties confronting the administration in the conduct of our foreign affairs. We are grateful that our beloved America is not a party to the awful war which is devastating Europe, and pray you will use your great influence and authority to keep our land at peace.

"2. We desire to respectfully recall the fact that in the election of November, the citizens of this country strongly favored our keeping out of the war in Europe, and the administration then elected was committed to peace. To now abandon that policy and plunge us into war, we hold, is to make a solemn mockery of the great American principle of the consent of the governed.

"3. We denounce the attempt of a large portion of our press to stampede our great nation into war; and, therefore, we believe, that the time for the citizens and the government to take counsel is now, for as loyal men and women of America we shall stand by our country, but as thoughtful men and women we realize and repeat the time of sane counsel is now, for, when the fateful plunge is taken our lips must and shall be sealed.

"4. We favor the use of the influence of this country in every proper way to end the horrible conflict in Europe, reminding the world that we stand for the American principle of equal justice to both sides, fair play to all. To that end we favor a conference of all the neutral nations to consider peaceful ways and means of terminating the war at the earliest possible moment.

"5. We urge all American citizens, and believe it their duty in behalf of their country to keep out of the barred zones of all belligerents.

"6. We believe that those citizens who object to being dragged into fighting other nations' battles are not lacking in patriotism for America; and we denounce the idea promulgated by the press that only the desire for war is the test of loyalty.

"7. We hold to the principle laid down by Washington, father of his country, to avoid entangling alliances with European countries, and in our dealings with other nations, to deal justly by all, and make favorites of none, and if, during this awful war our nation in its dealings with either or any belligerent has

done anything that savors of favoritism to any country, we do not approve of it, and we hope and pray all such things shall cease, so that our beloved land may stand before the judgment bar of history without a stain upon her flag, the flag we love.

"Resolved, that copies hereof be forwarded to the President and congress of the United States and the press.

"I certify above resolution was enthusiastically and unanimously adopted by meeting of thirty-five hundred citizens, limit of hall capacity. Seven thousand more could not gain entrance.

"CHAS. A. DALBY,
"Chairman of the Mass Meeting."

HE KNEW

Willis—"The Highfliers are going to give up their big house this winter."

Mrs. Willis—"You must be mistaken. I was talking with Mrs. Highflier only yesterday."

Willis—"Well, I was talking with the mortgagee only this morning."—Puck.

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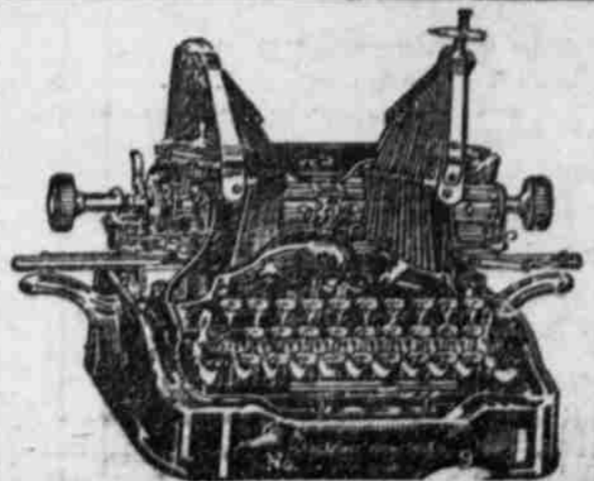
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