

National Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic

[Speech of Hon. John G. Cooper, of Ohio, in the house of representatives, Friday, February 9, 1917.]

Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 1914 there came a message across the Atlantic that Europe was at war. To the American people it was like a bolt of lightning coming from the clear sky. But nevertheless it was true, and from that day to this there has been raging in Europe the most inhuman, bloody war since the world began. Millions of men have lost their lives, entire countries have been torn asunder by shot and shell, the life's blood of the best young manhood has clotted upon the battle field, millions of widows and orphans have been left desolate, with no father's hand to guide and protect them. Words would fail me were I to attempt to describe to you the terrible suffering, misery, and want that has been brought to the people of these warring nations during the more than two years of this terrible struggle.

On that eventful day when the bugle sounded the call for men to join the colors and go to the front, there was no hesitating. Brave men left their homes and firesides and answered the call by the millions. Why? They had heard the challenge of a crisis, and that is the message that is being brought to the American people today, "The challenge of a crisis."

The Great American Crisis

The great crisis which is facing the American people at this time is how much longer are we going to tolerate an institution that is eating at the very heartstrings of our people and undermining the foundations of our government. I refer to the un-American licensed liquor traffic. How much longer will the United States government be a partner to this evil, which is the greatest enemy to the home, to the church, to the schools, to the state and the nation that we have today? Yes, my fellow countrymen, this is the question that is facing the American people today. But we thank God that the battle to drive the liquor traffic out of our land is well under way, and today our hearts rejoice as we see the temperance forces steadily marching forward in this great fight to the final

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victory, when we shall see the total abolition of the liquor traffic from the United States of America.

That day is not very far away, for I believe that when the year 1920 shall have passed there will not be a drop of intoxicating liquor legally manufactured or sold in the United States of America for beverage purposes. Yes, my friends, we have reason to rejoice today for the wonderful progress that the temperance movement has made during the last 20 years. Over half the states in the union have eliminated old John Barelycorn from within their borders; 27 out of the 48 states have entered the dry column; of the 2,543 counties in this country there are only 355 in which liquor is sold; 85 per cent of our country is dry area and 65 per cent of our people live in dry territory. Today we can travel from coast to coast without going into a wet state; starting at the Atlantic coast in old Virginia we go south into North Carolina, then west through Tennessee, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, then northwest through Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon to the Pacific coast without touching a wet state. And so the temperance forces have gone steadily marching on, until the prospect for Nation-wide prohibition looks brighter than it ever did before.

The next logical step to progress and the abolition of the liquor traffic will be the submission by congress to the several states of an amendment to the federal constitution for national prohibition, which when ratified by three-fourths of the states of the Union will prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor throughout the Nation.

The Liquor Traffic Corrupts Politics
The liquor traffic ought to be abolished from the standpoint of clean

politics. Wherever the traffic exists we have corruption in politics. To carry out their corrupt practices the liquor business will resort to anything that is unlawful. It will not stop at violating the laws of God and man, there is no legislator it will not bribe, and no voter it will not buy if it can. It has its powerful lobbies at the doors and on the floors of our legislative halls, hounding our public officials night and day trying to force them to enact laws that will be for its benefit and in the interest of the corrupt business.

The last state-wide fight for prohibition in Texas gives us an example of what it will do in trying to corrupt voters. During this campaign in Texas the liquor interests poured into that state more than \$1,000,000 in trying to buy up the electorate. A fearless attorney general in this state was determined to prosecute them. He seized the books of one brewery, and the evidence that he found should make the blush of shame come to every American citizen that believes in clean, honest politics.

When they knew they were caught for violating the election laws they came into court and paid \$275,000 fines and \$50,000 court costs. In the books that the attorney general seized were some very interesting letters. One of these letters was from Adolphus Busch, the big brewer from St. Louis; and I have here an extract from it in which he says:

"It may cost us millions and even more to win this fight, but what of it? I will give \$100,000 extra if necessary. I mean to say by the above that everyone interested in the business should be willing to sacrifice all and everything he possesses to save our business from being ruined by a fanatical part of the people."

Other Examples of Corruption

My friends, we do not need to go as far as Texas to find this corrupt hand in politics. We have recently heard from them in the states of Indiana and Pennsylvania. The disgraceful record of liquor corruption in Terre Haute is still fresh in the minds of the people of our country. In this city the saloon was the meeting place of corrupt politicians, and they had a great system established for collecting money to help win at the elections.

An investigation was made with regard to the corrupt condition in politics in this city, and as a result 16 men were sent to the Federal prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kans. When these men were sentenced, the judge who presided at their trials made the statement that 90 per cent of the corruption in politics in Terre Haute could be traced to the saloon.

Again, in Pennsylvania we see the liquor people violating the corrupt-practices law, and out of the 100 indictments made a short time ago for violation of the election laws 70 of those indicted were brewery officials. Now, according to press reports they are trying to have the laws of the United States set aside, claiming they are within their lawful rights when they spend \$3,000,000 to corrupt politics in Pennsylvania. And at this point I desire to insert in the Record an article which appeared in the daily newspapers on December 16, 1916:

"Brewers Uphold Use of Money in

Election—Court Plea Denies Nation's Right to Curb Activities—'Money Their Only Language.'

"Pittsburgh, Pa., Dec., 16.

"Attacking the Federal corrupt-practices act as unconstitutional, attorneys for 75 brewing corporations indicted for the alleged illegal use of money in the congressional campaign of 1914 today in the United States district court here attempted to have the indictments set aside.

"D. P. Hibbard, of Philadelphia, in his argument, declared that congress had no more right to abridge the rights of the defendants than it had to abridge the right of free speech or a free press, as the campaign carried on by the brewing interests had been "educational, not corrupting."

"George E. Shaw, of Pittsburgh, cited principles laid down by Alexander Hamilton in support of his contention that the federal government had no right whatever to regulate elections, and in defining the word "money" as used in the act said: "The only language through which a corporation can speak is through spending money."

Mr. Speaker, the liquor people themselves admit the corruption and evil of their business, and to verify this statement I quote from the exact words which appeared in an editorial in the National Liquor Dealers' Journal of September 10, 1913, which is as follows:

[Editorial, National Liquor Dealers' Journal.]

"To us there is the handwriting on the wall, and its interpretation spells doom. The liquor business is to blame. It seems incapable of learning any lesson of advancement, or any motive but profit. To perpetuate itself, it has formed alliances with the slums that repel all conscientious and patriotic citizens. It deliberately aids the most corrupt political powers, and backs with all of its resources the most unworthy men, the most corrupt and recreant officials. It does not aid to the purification of municipal, state, or national administrations. * * * There are billions of property involved, and an industry of great employing power and tax-paying ability; but when the people decide that the truth is being told about the alcoholic liquor trade, the money value will not count, for conscience aroused puts the value of man above all things."

Mr. Speaker, this terrible indictment against the liquor traffic is not the statement of the temperance orator, but the words of the editor of the National Liquor Dealers' Journal.

The Saloon is the Breeding Place for Prostitution and Crime

That the saloon is largely responsible for immorality and prostitution was demonstrated by the report of the Chicago vice commission on the social evil in Chicago. On page 34 of the report the commission has the following to say about prostitution and the saloon:

"The commission has found in its investigation that the most dangerous immoral influence and the most important financial influence, outside of the business of prostitution as carried on in houses, is the disorderly saloon. The proprietors of these places are using prostitutes as an adjunct to the sale of beer and liquor, and are allowing them to openly solicit for immoral purposes in their rear rooms. This is done in spite of the constant statement of the brewers and liquor dealers that

THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF HEALTHY BOYS & GIRLS EAT Grape-Nuts AND CREAM EVERY MORNING BECAUSE WISE MOTHERS KNOW "There's a Reason"