

## Ohio Dry Democrats

[The following, taken from the Columbus, Ohio, State Journal, April 13, is an account of a called mass convention of democrats of Ohio who are in sympathy with the movement to make Ohio "Dry." The call was issued pursuant to action taken by 150 or more democrats from all sections of the state assembled at Columbus on January 18, 1917; which meeting was addressed by Mr. Bryan, who expressed his unqualified approval of such a convention and his strong personal desire that an active organization be formed by democrats of Ohio to aid in the movement to vote Ohio dry on November 6, 1917.—Ed.]

William Jennings Bryan rejoiced as much in the spread of democracy in the world, citing Germany as the latest example, as he did in what he called the onward sweep of prohibition in his address yesterday before the convention of Ohio dry democrats.

Referring to the kaiser's request of his chancellor to prepare plans for reforms in the suffrage system of Germany, to be adopted at the conclusion of the war, Mr. Bryan said:

"The question now is whether the kaiser can keep up with the movement he officially recognizes. He has had his ear on the ground and seen the tide of the times. He had to make a promise, but it may be that the promise will only accelerate the movement and it is a question whether he can keep ahead of it."

### No Division Now

Mr. Bryan alluded indirectly to his own activities as a pacifist during the last two years, asserting that it was to be expected that in a country of 100,000,000 population there would be divergent views on subjects and that everybody had the right to express them.

"Now, however, the discussion has ended," he continued, "and the people of the entire country will stand undivided behind the President. In no other country should the people be so willing to make extreme sacrifices as in the United States."

Bryan pointed out that out of 25 dry states, 18 are in the democratic column, that the Webb-Kenyon act, the first national legislation on the dry question, was passed by a democratic congress and signed by a democratic President, that still more recently a democratic congress passed the "bone dry" amendment.

### Seek Dry State

Approximately 150 delegates attended the convention. Twice this number were drawn to the meeting in the afternoon, when Bryan spoke. The assembly was in the Chamber of Commerce auditorium.

Delegates adopted a resolution pledging themselves to assist in making the state dry next fall and demanding of congress national legislation, particularly because the nation is at war.

The democratic dry campaign is to be directed from state headquarters to be opened in Columbus.

James A. Rice, former mayor of Canton, who presided yesterday, was made chairman of the executive committee, whose other members are: State Senator J. H. Miller, Newark; J. R. Alexander, Zanesville; J. H. Secrest, Columbus; A. A. May-silles, Dayton; Theodore Bayless, Findlay, and J. W. Winn, Defiance.

The executive committee will name a congressional district committee of

22 members, one from each district. This committee, in turn, will appoint a county committee of 88, one for each county.

### Speech of James A. Rice

Following is the address of James A. Rice, former mayor of Canton, before the convention:

"My friends, this is an auspicious gathering of free men. The presence of each democrat here is proof of his understanding of democratic principles and purposes, and of his devotion to a great movement to secure the greatest good to the greatest number.

"And be it understood that we come together with malice towards none and with charity for all. These battles to destroy the traffic in alcoholic liquors for beverage uses are not battles against any class or set of men, but they are battles against the greatest existing menace to the welfare and well-being of all men. A menace which shortens the lives of men, destroys the lives of men, and projects itself into the future and blights the progeny of men.

"Even those engaged in the manufacture or sale of liquor do not escape its harmful influences. If they do not fall victims to the injurious effects of liquor through drinking, they become ostracized from decent society and are compelled to live in an atmosphere and under environments which make impossible the development of their nobler and better natures.

"Every claim ever advanced in favor of the use of alcohol for human consumption has been proven false. It has been claimed that alcohol is a stimulant, but now we know it to be a narcotic and an anaesthetic; that alcohol is a food, but now we know it to be a poison; that it is a preventive of disease, but now we know it prevents none but causes many diseases; that it increases man's strength and powers of endurance, but now we know it robs man of both strength and endurance; that it is in many ways helpful to man, but now we know it is in every way harmful to man.

"Also, every claim ever advanced in justification of the saloon has been proven false. It has been claimed to be a man's inherent right to conduct a saloon, but every court in the land has decreed the contrary; that the saloon business is as legitimate as other kinds of business, but it violates with defiance and impunity the laws of our states and nation which our legislatures have been obliged to pass in order to provide against the evils to society which result only from the saloon; that the saloon is essential to the poor man's happiness, but every one knows that it robs the poor man and the poor man's family of both comfort and happiness.

"Those engaged in manufacturing and selling liquors claim that they help to support our local, state and national governments, but we know that for every dollar of revenue they provide they add twenty dollars to the burdens of the taxpayers; they claim that they employ much labor at high wages, but the truth is they employ less labor, and at lower wages than any other kind of business with a like amount of capital invested; they insist that they have a right to the profits of their business and that labor has a right to work for them, but men and nations now take the higher view that no business, however profitable, has

a right to exist if the natural and certain consequences of that business are injurious to society, and that labor has no right to be employed in such business. Public health, public safety, public morals, and public welfare are all paramount to the rights of any man either to profits or to employment.

"The falsity of all of the claims made on behalf of alcohol, the saloon, the brewery and the distillery having been proven by scientific research and practical demonstration and experience, the claim is now made by those who profit from the traffic in liquors that the destruction of the liquor business amounts to a confiscation of property and a wrongful taking away of a man's personal liberty.

"To the first of these claims we reply that as early as 1856 the country was given due notice by the supreme court of the United States that the legislatures of the several states have full power to regulate, restrict or destroy the liquor traffic, and every man who in any way since then has invested in the liquor business must be held to have assumed all the risks incident to that business. To the second of these claims, that in regard to personal liberty, we reply that nowhere in the organic or statutory law of any state or nation do we find the phrase 'personal liberty,' and that therefore, no such liberty is recognized under our system of government.

"So, driven from one untenable position to another, the liquor people now come boldly into the open and declare that they will not obey, and can not be made to obey, the law in any event.

"This is a defiance so brazen that it ought to and will hasten the day when the last distillery, brewery and saloon will have been banished from our land. The liquor interest is the only interest which ever has had the effrontery to openly and avowedly defy the laws of the land. Other interests have resisted the passage of laws intended to regulate or restrict them in the handling of their property or affairs on grounds of public policy or public welfare, but when those laws were once passed they promptly submitted to their mandates; and if the laws proved to be unjust or unduly severe, then they sought their amendment or repeal by resort to legal and peaceful methods.

"My friends, these and many other things all combine to make it inevitable that open traffic in alcoholic liquors must cease. It is written in the letter and sounds in the spirit of God's immutable law that whenever his people develop up to a plane on which any existing thing becomes an obstacle in the way of their still higher development, that thing must go. That is why civil tyranny, religious oppression and human slavery had to cease, and that is why the saloon will have to go. Man's ever increasing knowledge of eternal and immutable laws is everywhere manifesting itself in the affairs and hearts of men. A finer sense of human fellowship, a keener interest in the welfare of others, a greater willingness to forego or forbear for the good of all, are things everywhere apparent among men, with the result that men engaged in all lines of business and professions, leaders in every line of industry, organizations of men for the betterment of business and social conditions, are everywhere raising the ban against the saloon and forbidding the service of alcoholic beverages at

their public functions and abstaining from their use in private.

"And this war against the saloon appeals to every state of mind and every conception of religion. The militant and the peace loving man, the Protestant and the Catholic, the liberal and the orthodox, all find in it a common good to be attained. Every man who holds justice above greed, public welfare above selfish interests, comfort for many above luxury for a few, cleanliness above squalor, virtue above vice, manhood and womanhood above money or power, can make common cause in this war.

"By and through this great mass convention the democrats of Ohio who are in sympathy with the movement to make Ohio dry and in favor of voting the saloon out of Ohio on November 6, 1917, prove the very essence of their democracy. They declare against the worship of mammon and for a greater service to men; against special privileges for some and in favor of equal opportunities for all; against corruption in politics and for the establishment of a higher social order; against any and all institutions that prey upon society and for the greater upbuilding of institutions that benefit society. And they declare, also, their faith in the universal brotherhood of man and their trust in the ultimate establishment of lasting peace and Christian fellowship among nations.

"And what sound reason can any democrat offer for his refusal to join in this movement? If it be because he is afraid of losing business or money, then he is neither true Christian nor true democrat. If it be because he fears he will lose social standing and prestige, then he aspires to nothing higher than to be a nabob or a toady in society. If it be because he wants to get or hold onto a political office and fears his chances to do so would be lessened, then he puts selfish interest above principle and proves himself too big a coward to be a good public official. If he says it is out of harmony with the trend and performance of his party, then he is ignorant or unmindful of the fact that many states have gone dry under democratic rule, and that the first prohibition law ever passed by our notional congress was passed by a democratic house and democratic senate and signed by a democratic President.

"But, my friends, we do not assume to speak in this convention for the democratic party in Ohio. We do not seek to bind or commit our party to a position for or against the proposition to vote the saloon out of Ohio on next November 6. What we aim and desire to do by this convention is, to serve notice on the liquor interests everywhere that in Ohio there are tens of thousands of democrats who yield no deference or allegiance to them and who stand in no fear of them."

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