

fourths of the state legislatures will have ratified the proposed amendment and the country will be bone dry one year from that time. Twenty-four of the states have enacted dry legislation and they are counted upon to ratify the proposed amendment without any difficulty. The dry drive will now be concentrated on all of the other states, with Mr. Bryan leading the cohorts of prohibition.

"As a result of the vote in the house today Bryan again has made himself a political leader of the democratic party, and has pushed his new moral issue to the front as a preliminary to the next campaign. He watched the proceedings all day from the press gallery of the house, and at the psychological moment, when it was certain that the dries had carried the day, appeared on the floor of the house.

"Mr. Bryan, entitled to the privileges of the floor as a former representative, was surrounded in a moment by more than a score of democrats whose greetings gave the impression that congratulations were being heaped upon him for the success of the dry movement.

"To The Sun correspondent Mr. Bryan reiterated his prophesy of some months ago that the wet and dry issue would be a predominant one in the next presidential campaign, and predicted that the platforms of both great political parties would adopt strong prohibition planks for their national platforms.

"Within three years at least two-thirds of the states of the union will have indorsed the constitutional amendment which congress has voted to submit to the people," Mr. Bryan said. "There are now twenty-seven dry states, and the twelve others necessary to make two-thirds of the forty-eight states of the union will be secured without great difficulty. The fight is almost won."

"Mr. Bryan pointed out one feature of the situation which makes it easier for the dry forces to secure ratification by the legislatures than it is to amend their own separate constitutions. To amend state constitutions and make the state dry until it is repealed 'it is necessary to secure a two-thirds majority of both houses of the state legislature, Mr. Bryan explained. To secure ratification by the states for the dry amendment to be submitted to the states he showed it will require only a bare majority in each state legislature of the required thirty-six."

COLONEL BRYAN ON THE SCENE

The Washington correspondence of the Raleigh (N. C.) News and Observer, under date of December 17, contains the following:

"The history making event was staged today under noteworthy environments. Speaker Champ Clark upon rapping the house to order admonished the galleries to forego the opportunity to give assent or dissent to the debate by hand-clapping or demonstration. 'It is an exciting question on the floor,' he said, and more often than once commanded the members of congress, 'Take your seats, gentlemen, and keep them.'

"Immediately to the left of the press gallery sat the distinguished statesman who has nationalized grape juice—the Hon. William Jennings Bryan. His rapt attention in the floods of house oratory and invective of the anti-prohibitionists was only interrupted by an occasional newspaper man who would edge up to him and propound a question. The great Commoner had issued through the Washington morning newspapers an advertisement of one-fourth of a page answering the attack made upon the issue by Samuel Gompers. The funds to defray this costly advertisement came out of the pockets of Mr. Bryan as a personal contribution to the cause of prohibition.

"The Commoner emphasized the point that the plea of states' rights from Mr. Gompers was a feeble attempt and 'comes with poor grace from one who is defending a business which tramples roughshod on the rights of states as well as the rights of smaller communities whenever they ask for a voice or a vote on any proposition connected with the saloons.' He amended his statement with the note that Mr. Gompers had done yeoman service in behalf of democracy and felt sure that on reflection he would see that the best way to win this war would be to recognize the right of the rule of the people."

MR. BRYAN REPLIES TO MR. GOMPERS

A Washington dispatch to the Christian Science Monitor, Boston, under date of Dec. 22, says: An advertisement with a four-column title

in large type reading, "An open letter from Mr. William Jennings Bryan to Hon. Edwin Y. Webb, Chairman of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, on the pending national prohibition amendment," appeared in the Washington Post of Dec. 17. At the bottom was printed a note which said:

"This advertisement is paid for by William Jennings Bryan as a personal contribution to the prohibition cause."

Following is Mr. Bryan's letter in full:

Hon. Edwin Y. Webb, Chairman, Committee of the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Webb: I have just read in the Sunday Star Mr. Gompers' appeal to congress to postpone the submission of the constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors.

I beg to call your attention to certain implications contained in his open letter which convert his appeal into a strong argument in favor of immediate submission of the amendment:

First: By singling out the nine subordinate organizations for which he speaks, namely, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, United Brewery Workers' Union, Cigarmakers' International Union, Glass Bottle Blowers' Union, International Coopers' Union, International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers, Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen, American Federation of Musicians, and Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders' International Alliance, he admits that the Federation of Labor, as a whole, does not support him in the position which he takes. In fact, he expressly disclaims that he speaks officially when he says:

"I do not address you and through you the judiciary committee as an officer of any organization, but as a man and a citizen," etc.

And of the nine branches for which he assumes to speak, only two (which will be mentioned later) will suffer materially by the adoption of prohibition and they only temporarily.

The carpenters, for instance, can not suffer, because more people can and will build homes, as is shown in the states that are dry. The steam engineers and stationary firemen can not suffer because the money lost to liquor houses will give increased patronage to those engaged in other kinds of business. The cigar makers will not suffer because a decreasing percentage of the total output of cigars is handled by the saloons—already there are twenty-seven states in which prohibition has been adopted and several states will be added to the list next year. Coopers will not suffer because more barrels will be needed for food when less money is spent on drink, and, as for the Bottle Blowers, they will be kept busy making bottles for milk for the babies that are now neglected, and bottles for the soft drinks which are taking the place of intoxicating beverages.

Mr. Gompers speaks for only a FEW of the laboring men, for only a few can, by any possibility, lose employment because of the abolition of the saloons. Among the nine organizations mentioned there are, however, two whose members will be temporarily affected—the brewery workers and the bartenders. They certainly will lose their jobs, but with the present demand for labor they will have no difficulty in finding employment which will pay them better than their present work and be more satisfactory to them and their families.

In his effort to aid a small fraction of the laboring men of the country, Mr. Gompers overlooks the material and moral welfare of a large majority of the wage earners who will be blessed by the banishment of drinking places. Would it not have been more fair for Mr. Gompers to have given both sides? Should he not have referred, for instance, to the prohibition resolutions passed by the Locomotive Engineers, numbering 70,000? Why does he fail to mention the increasing support which laboring men are giving to prohibition in state and nation?

Second: Mr. Gompers, by his silence, repudiates the "personal liberty" argument—the stock argument of the liquor interests for so many years. And well he may, for it is an outcast and an outlaw. The public is too well informed now as to the evils inseparably connected with the saloons, to tolerate any longer the impudent assertion that any man's "personal liberty" includes the right to demand the establishment of saloons which can not exist without impairing the productive power of the community, ruining homes, impoverishing families, menacing morals, producing poverty, manufac-

turing criminals, debauching society and corrupting politics.

Third: Mr. Gompers' feeble plea for states' rights comes with poor grace from one who is defending a business which tramples roughshod on the rights of states as well as on the rights of smaller communities whenever they ask for a voice or a vote on any proposition connected with the saloons. In Texas the liquor interests have recently prevented the submission of a prohibition amendment to the state constitution, and they did this in spite of the expressed wish of a democratic primary and in spite of the fact that a large majority of the legislators in both houses favored submission. In New Jersey the liquor interests have fought bitterly against local option and tried to prevent legislation giving a vote even to cities and towns. Those who make a profit out of the liquor business do not respect the right of ANY community, large or small, to protect itself from the saloon. The reserved rights of the states are necessary to them and to the nation; we can not afford to jeopardize these rights by linking them with the fate of the saloon—we can not afford to chain them to a corpse.

But Mr. Gompers' plea for postponement is, when analyzed, even a more convincing argument in favor of prohibition. He says:

"A large number of Americans, whether natives or by adoption, drink beer, and in some instances light wines, as a part of their daily meals. Is prohibition or the threat of prohibition calculated to tranquillize and win them to the support of our country and the great cause in which we are engaged—or otherwise? Is it wise to bring so great a controversial question to the foreground during these crucial days when we need the united support, in spirit and action, of all our people?"

He exaggerates the number of those whose loyalty to Bacchus and Barleycorn and Gamberinus is greater than their loyalty to their government. I am not willing to admit that the alcoholic habit is so firmly fixed in any large number of our people that their patriotism must be measured by the quart or that it depends upon the amount of intoxicating liquor which they can obtain. If we have any considerable number of such, then the very existence of this overmastering appetite is a menace to the nation; it makes the beer schooner more dangerous than the German submarine. We had better remove the alcoholic appendix than allow it to imperil its victims. This threat of disloyalty on the part of the liquor interests ought not to turn the peoples from their purpose to free the country from its greatest enemy. If the advocates of beer will not support the government with words unless the saloons are permitted to aid the enemy, we can better afford to lose their vocal support than tolerate their business.

Mr. Gompers cites the action of European nations on this question as if it were worthy of imitation, evidently forgetting that we have already refused to follow their example and made it unlawful to sell any kind of intoxicating liquor to a soldier in uniform. Shall we repeal that wholesome law in order to conform to European standards, or shall we continue to set them an example? Instead of patterning after the nations that feed alcohol to their soldiers, it is better to go even farther than we have and restrain those who would, by the manufacture and sale of liquor, sap the strength of the men who must produce food and fashion the weapons of war.

Mr. Gompers pleads for unity, but how shall unity be obtained? By servile submission to a brewery autocracy whose methods are as unscrupulous as the methods of the kaiser? No. Let unity be obtained by applying the fundamental democratic doctrine of acquiescence in the will of the majority.

Mr. Gompers has in the past done yeoman service in behalf of democracy; I feel sure that he will, on reflection, see that the best way to help win the war is to recognize the right of the people to rule in the United States as well as elsewhere, especially when the rights of the minority are so carefully safeguarded as to require the endorsement of the prohibition amendment by thirty-six of the forty-eight states before it can become a part of the constitution of the United States. If the American people are not competent to sit in judgment on the question of saloons, with what consistency can they commend popular government to the people of any other country?

Very truly yours,

(Signed) WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN.