

## Nebraska Will Yet Ratify

The special session of the Nebraska legislature which was in session for two weeks and has just adjourned, failed to ratify the national prohibition constitutional amendment. Governor Neville, in calling the special session for the purpose of passing legislation to permit the Nebraska soldiers to vote, refused to include in the call the matter of ratification of the national prohibition amendment although urged to do so by the dry forces of Nebraska.

The present members of the Nebraska legislature were elected in November, 1916, at the time when the prohibition amendment to the state constitution was submitted, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. At that election the people of Nebraska adopted state prohibition by a majority of about thirty thousand. The dry forces at the same election carried the lower house of the legislature by a large majority, but the democratic candidate for governor and a majority of the state senate were nominated by the liquor forces in Nebraska and were elected in the Wilson landslide in Nebraska that year, and as a result, as was recently brought to light, of an endorsement by the German-American alliance in this state, which brought to their support the entire German vote of the state, which heretofore has been largely republican.

At the regular session of the Nebraska legislature a year ago last January, the dry forces succeeded in passing an effective law to enforce the state prohibition constitutional amendment. A majority of the state senate and the governor were obligated to the liquor interests for their election, but a few of the wet senators had made a pledge in their campaign for election that if elected they would vote for the bill that was supported by a majority of the dry forces in the legislature. The house passed a very effective enforcement law, and after the wet senators and the governor held out as long as they could in an effort to amend the house bill so as to cripple it, they were unable to make the house yield, and fearing to permit the legislature to adjourn without adopting an effective enforcement law, the few wet senators who had given a pledge to vote as the majority of the dry forces in the legislature decided, finally yielded as they could not hold out any longer and face their constituents at home. These few wet senators had made no pledge, however, to vote for a NATIONAL prohibition constitutional amendment, and when called in special session, stood with the other wet senators, making the wet vote stand eighteen to thirteen, and defied the will of the people on the liquor question.

The governor, in refusing to include the ratification of the national constitutional amendment in his call for a special session of the legislature, said that he knew the complexion of the senate and did not think they would pass it if he included it, and the wet members of the senate refused to consider the national prohibition amendment, giving as their excuse the fact that the governor had not included it in his call. The senate also refused to adopt a resolution that was offered in the senate requesting the governor to send in a subsequent message to the legislature asking them to consider the matter of ratification.

There came to light during the recent special session of the Nebraska legislature a document that was published in German, signed by the president of the German-American alliance, pledging Keith Neville, present governor of Nebraska, and the eighteen wet members of the Nebraska legislature to the Germans of Nebraska that they were against "prohibition and other nativistic ideas." During the recent special session of the legislature, the people of Nebraska passed resolutions in churches, in mass meetings, woman's clubs, Christian Endeavors, etc., and signed petitions to the members of the legislature and sent telegrams and letters by the score urging them to adopt the prohibition amendment and not only carry out the will of the people of Nebraska as expressed at the polls a year and a half ago, but take such action as a patriotic war measure, but to no avail.

The Commoner publishes on another page the

proceedings of the legislature and a few of the telegrams, resolutions, interviews, and editorials by the state press, so that the readers of The Commoner may have an opportunity to see what the sentiment of Nebraska is and how the people were betrayed by the men who were elected through the German-American alliance and the other liquor interests of the state. We also publish the translation of the endorsement of the governor and eighteen wet senators by the German-American alliance at the time of their election, and an appeal made to the German voters of Nebraska to rally to their support.

The liquor forces of Nebraska are planning to make a fight in Nebraska this fall for the election of a majority of the state senate in the hope of still further postponing the ratification of the prohibition national constitutional amendment. Their refusal to permit the consideration of the question of ratification in the recent special session had a two-fold purpose. It would give the wet reactionary forces in Nebraska an opportunity to draw a large campaign slush fund from the National Brewers' Association in the hope of controlling the next legislature and the governor in their interests, and also for each month that they can delay the final ratification of the national prohibition amendment it means a profit of about a hundred million dollars to the brewers of this country, who can well afford to furnish campaign funds to any state that has men who are willing to defy the public sentiment and do the bidding of the brewers.

The men who, in the recent special session of the Nebraska legislature, refused to carry out the will of at least three-fourths of the people of Nebraska, will be repudiated by the voters of Nebraska should they stand as candidates for re-election, and The Commoner has no hesitancy in pledging its readers that Nebraska will ratify the national prohibition constitutional amendment next January, when the new legislature convenes that will be elected in November.

### MASSACHUSETTS RATIFIES

The state of Massachusetts is to be congratulated on setting the example to the New England states by the ratification of the prohibition national amendment. The large majority by which both houses of the Massachusetts legislature ratified the prohibition constitutional amendment reflects the overwhelming sentiment of the country that the liquor business is a menace to the welfare of the nation. No one can truthfully say a good word in connection with the liquor business other than that it is nearing its end. The sooner the other New England states follow the lead of Massachusetts in giving to the liquor interest its death-blow, the larger their share in the credit for having rid the country of its disastrous effect and its demoralizing influence.

Of the candidates for the Nebraska state senate endorsed by the German-American alliance, eighteen were elected. The same eighteen, and ONLY these eighteen, and the governor, prevented the ratification of the national prohibition constitutional amendment, which would hasten the closing of the breweries and save food grains equal in value to one loaf of bread each day for each soldier of the American and allied armies who are now fighting Germany.

### DELAWARE LEADS

To the governor of Delaware goes the credit of calling the first special session of a legislature that has ratified the national prohibition constitutional amendment. The members of the Delaware legislature also deserve great credit for the patriotic impulse which caused them to act so promptly. Each day saved by putting into effect the national prohibition amendment means the daily saving of food grain equal in value to about five million loaves of bread, that is worse than wasted by permitting the brewers to continue to grind food grains while the American people are conserving the food supply in the interest of the allied armies.

The prohibition national amendment becomes effective automatically twelve months after the 36th state has ratified. Who will be the next governor to call a special session of the legislature to follow the splendid example set by the governor and legislature of Delaware?

## The Brand of the Beast

When the liquor traffic burns its brand into a man's hide it is hard to get it off. Governor Neville, of Nebraska, furnishes a recent illustration. He was selected by the liquor interests, and nominated by their active aid. They made his campaign for him and secured him the endorsement of the German-American Alliance. He ran far behind the presidential candidate, receiving about 6,753 plurality, when Wilson received 41,256. He promised to abide by the decision if the prohibition amendment was adopted, but subsequent events show how worthless a promise is when made by one who is under obligation to the liquor interests.

The senate, the only branch of the legislature in which he has any influence, spent three months trying to nullify the prohibition amendment adopted by over 29,000 majority.

Now he calls a special session of the legislature and not only refuses to mention the prohibition amendment in the call, but refuses to lay it before the legislature after it assembles, and the house by an almost unanimous vote had formally requested him to do so.

"No man can serve two masters," so the governor seems to have decided to serve the beast that branded him instead of the people who pay him his salary. But the days of the beast are numbered; it will soon be powerless to punish or reward. Two years from today there will not be a saloon under the American flag, but the brand of the beast—is the governor willing to carry it during the remainder of his life?

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### A "HARD-WORKING BURGLAR"

A "hard-working burglar" makes the following inquiry:

"Please answer this letter. I am a hard-working burglar, supporting a large family. Yet I feel it my patriotic duty to make an honest income tax report so that the government can use the money to fight the biggest burglar in the world—the kaiser.

"Now, if I make out a report of my income and specify the places where I got it, will the records be turned over to the police? I wish to be patriotic, but naturally must keep in business on account of my dependents."

It is a little hard to make him disclose the source of his income. Why not lump it as a "professional income" and pay the special rate? Or he might class it as business and pay on his net income from nightly prowls.

The brewer is not compelled to enumerate the men dragged down to drunkards graves; it would embarrass him to require a list of those killed to insure his income. The hard-working burglar ought to be treated like the brewer—their occupations are equally criminal.

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A strong fight is being made on the nonpartisan league in Nebraska, one of the points of assault being that this is no time to form any new combinations that are certain to divide the people and arouse class hatred. The argument would have more force if the same amount of energy were devoted to objecting to the formation of combinations against the farmer so that there would be no incentive on the part of the farmer to organize.

### DEMOCRACY IN NEBRASKA

Democracy means the right of the people to rule. We are engaged in a war to make democracy safe throughout the world — why not practice democracy in Nebraska? A majority of the Nebraska senators represent districts that voted for state prohibition in November, 1916, and these senators finally acknowledged the rights of their constituents by voting for laws necessary for the enforcement of the prohibition amendment. They know that more favor national prohibition than favor state prohibition, and yet some of these senators dare to ignore the wishes of their constituents and oppose ratification. Do they believe in democracy anywhere? Or do they favor the monarchial form of government where the people have no voice?

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