

Liquor Conditions in Europe

Summary and recommendations of commissioners Drs. James Cannon, Jr., and E. J. Moore, appointed by the Anti-Saloon League of America to make a first-hand study of conditions surrounding our soldiers and sailors in Great Britain and France, with special reference to the evils of intemperance and prostitution, which report, on May 15, 1918, according to agreement made in advance, was submitted to the secretary of war, Newton D. Baker, and the secretary of the navy, Hon. Josephus Daniels. The report in full has been printed in pamphlet form for distribution by the American Issue Publishing Co., Westerville, Ohio, and on the basis of the facts stated in the body of the report the following summary and recommendations are presented:

SUMMARY.

1. The American military and naval forces in Europe are a splendid body of men. Taking as a whole they are so clean, so sober, and so efficient that they bring a feeling of pride to every American who sees them, and who knows the record they are making.

2. The commanding officers of the army and navy are deeply concerned for the morals of the men under their control. They are in full sympathy with the law passed by congress for the protection of the soldiers and sailors from vice and intemperance, and are earnest and persistent in their efforts to promote continence and sobriety in both officers and men, not simply by prohibitory and repressive measures, but by positive efforts to divert and occupy the time and thought of the men when off duty with social, recreational, educational, and amusement features of an innocent and elevating nature.

3. The people of the United States have emphasized in the most positive and helpful fashion the duty of a nation to care for the social and moral welfare of its sons in time of war by the splendid contributions they have made in men, women and money for carrying on the work of the Y. M. C. A., and the Y. W. C. A., and the Red Cross, thus making it possible for the soldiers to have in every city, town, and camp, where they may be located, comfortable meeting places, where under the supervision of intelligent, patriotic, helpful men and women, social, educational, recreational and religious opportunities are offered, which are of incalculable pleasure and profit to the men, and the surest possible preventive of drunkenness and immorality. These great organizations, working along with the chaplains, strongly supported and aided as they are by the commanding officers of the army and navy, act as a great social, moral, and spiritual tonic, permeating the great body of men.

4. While the American sailors and soldiers taken as a body are doubtless far above the average in clean and sober living, yet there is much drinking of wine and beer, very much more than among the forces in the United States and much among men who had not contracted the habit before. There is also very considerable drinking of strong liquors, especially brandy (although forbidden in General Order No. 77) in the seaport cities, in London and Paris, and in all the larger towns and cities, but decreasing to a minimum in the towns and villages in the fighting zone. There has been "drinking to excess," especially in London and Paris and the port cities, which has sometimes been so great as to cause very unfavorable comment and to require strict repressive measures to be taken by the commanding officers. Such drinking has been accompanied, as is usually the case, with sexual immorality, as a result of which in some sections "venereal disease was reaching a percentage larger than could be ignored." It appears that in proportion to numbers there has been a greater amount of drinking to excess and of immorality among the officers than among the men. This appears to be due to the fact that in creating such a large body of officers, it has happened, as might have been expected, that many have been commissioned who have been lacking in discretion and self control. When freed from the restraint of the prohibitory laws against intoxicants and prostitution in the United States, and given the freedom which officers have in

France, such men have not restrained themselves, but have indulged their appetites to the detriment of discipline among the men under them and to the dishonor of the American uniform, which, to the praise of the higher officers be it said, has resulted in their discharge from the navy and army and their return to the United States.

5. General order, No. 77, which was issued in order to meet the unsatisfactory conditions existing, especially in the port towns has been helpful, but while it has checked, it has not controlled the evils. The exemption of light wines and beer is a distinct lowering of the standard set for the army and navy by congressional action, and whatever good has resulted from the rest of the order, the exemption of light wines and beer has not only produced no results to compensate for the public official lowering of the American prohibitory standard, but on the contrary the drinking of wine and beer have undoubtedly been increased by the order, and men are forming wine-drinking habits which will plague them for life. Furthermore, under cover of the permit to drink wine, the stronger liquors are frequently purchased without detection or punishment.

6. The mail service from the United States to the forces in Europe is not satisfactory. It is handled slowly, and many unnecessary mistakes and delays occur, and men absent from their business and families are not kept in touch with home life as they should be. Letters and papers from home renew the home ties and oftentimes prevent yielding to temptation to drink and immorality.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. It is recommended that the standard adopted by congress in the passage of the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicants to soldiers and sailors in uniform and the practice of prostitution in the zone of the military naval camps be maintained for our soldiers and sailors when they leave the United States. General order, No. 77, should be strengthened at once by striking out the exemption as to light wines and beer, and prohibiting the purchase, possession, or acceptance as a gift of all kinds of intoxicating liquor. It should also be made applicable to the navy as well as the army. The sweeping order of General Scott for the Bordeaux base, which prohibits any officer or man to be in the company of a woman of immoral character, on the street, in a cafe, or in any room or house of assignation or prostitution, should be extended to apply to all American soldiers and sailors. The violation of this order should subject the offender to court-martial and punishment as provided in General order, No. 77, and officers should be given to understand that they will be held responsible for the strict enforcement of this order.

There should be no hesitation and no delay in issuing this order and in passing this legislation, for the prompt taking of such action will prevent the formation of wine-drinking habits by American soldiers and sailors, and the purchase of strong liquors under the cloak of the wine bottle, and would result in a still greater reduction in sexual vice.

2. It is recommended that the American government, either through the department of state, or through the military and naval authorities, request the governments of Great Britain and France to issue an order prohibiting the sale of intoxicants by residents of those countries to American soldiers and sailors in uniform in deference to the standards concerning intoxicants and prostitution established by the United States for its army and navy, and recently emphasized in a statement made by General Pershing in which he said: "From the military point of view we can not tolerate alcohol among our soldiers. War is merciless; men must be competent; the drinking man makes a bad soldier. The army won't stand alcohol because it must conserve its manpower."

3. It is recommended that the secretary of war and the secretary of the navy unite in a joint statement to the American people, emphasizing in the strongest possible way the great and beneficent work which is being done by the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and the Red Cross in Europe, not only in furnishing physical comforts and social pleasures, but in strengthening the moral fibre of the men, and assisting them to resist solicitations to vice and intemperance. Every proper stimulus should be given to secure the subscriptions by our peo-

ple of whatever sum may be necessary to maintain the work of such organizations in full vigor, enabling them to send to Europe a force of men and women, adapted to perform the services of inspiration, uplift, and practical helpfulness, which has already counted for so much in the lives of our men in the training camps, and which is doubly needed now that they are to be engaged in active battle.

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Commissioners.

BANK GUARANTY

[From the Commercial and Financial Chronicle, New York.]

The proposal to guarantee bank deposits is not now entirely new, but is fully as indefensible as ever. As pending in the Senate, all deposits in national banks, whether large or small, are to be guaranteed up to \$5,000; the fund for this purpose is to be obtained by a tax of not over one-tenth of one per cent on the deposits of each bank up to the limit of the guaranteed amount. On behalf of this, one plea is offered: that by promoting a feeling of security in the mind of the owner of deposits of moderate size the general business structure will receive strength, and also there will be a tendency to the more free circulation of money by attracting small hoards out of private hiding places where they are both unsafe and unproductive.

Very little force can be attached to the last plea. The tendency towards availing of the conveniences of the bank deposit and the bank check has been continuous these many years. *

If the idea of guaranteeing by a tax upon all engaged in the particular line is sound, where should it stop? A proposal to hold the resources of savings banks everywhere liable for the deposits of all, or to similarly hold the assets of all life insurance companies liable for the policy obligations of all, or to hold the resources of all transportation corporations liable for the securities of all and any, would arouse instant protest. To make all property responsible for all debts would be chimerical; but to hold all banks responsible for \$5,000 worth of the deposits of all looks in the same direction, differing only in degree. The proposition is to encourage incompetence and recklessness by making competency and care responsible for their results. The proviso that deposits bearing interests at over 4% per annum shall not be covered is no improvement, for it tends to invite offering interest up to that rate. * * *

The Clearing House association has protested unanimously against this proposition, declaring it "in violation of common justice and common fairness." It would mulct stockholders in order to compensate for mismanagement in other institutions perhaps thousands of miles distant "and over which no mutual control or relationship exists." The inducement to individual care and the sense of responsibility would be impaired if people are to be relieved by any form of legislation from the effects of negligence. The association justly denounces this bill as wrong in principle; "it would impose an unjust burden upon conservative bank management and would exercise a deleterious influence upon every community." The chamber of commerce has followed by adopting a committee report which indorses the protest of the banks.

There are some worse because more far-reaching propositions than this, but there is none more utterly indefensible. And the fact that it is being offered in war times makes it all the more necessary that we should be on our guard against it. It should be smothered.

It is difficult to satisfy a person who has set his mind on being critical. Billy Sunday was given a freewill offering of \$120,000 in New York city and \$50,000 in Chicago. The first he distributed among the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A. and the Red Cross, and the second he gave to the little Pacific street mission where he was converted years ago. Those who said Sunday was in evangelism for the money he made out of it now sneeringly say that his converts don't stick anyway.

The force of public sentiment was never more strikingly displayed than in the very rapid disappearance from view of the self-styled red-blooded American who made as the test of everybody else's loyalty that they agreed with him.