

The Commoner

ISSUED MONTHLY

Entered at the Postoffice at Lincoln, Nebraska, as second-class matter.

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 Edit. Rms. and Business Office, Suite 207 Press Bldg.

One Year	\$1.00	Three Months25
Six Months50	Single Copy10
In Clubs of Five or more, per year..	.75	Sample Copies Free.	
		Foreign Post, 25c Extra	

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THE COMMONER, LINCOLN, NEB.

An exemption board in Waterloo, Iowa, recently ruled that newspapers belong on the list of non-essentials in war-time. Some of the Chicago dailies must have a large circulation in Waterloo.

As a proof of the increasing sanity of the people the test of whether a man is loyal to the government now is his patriotic support of its activities and its program, and not where he was born or the name he bears.

That Rainbow division of the American army that stemmed the Germans at Chateau Thierry and thus enabled Foch to resume the offensive seems to have lived up to the old traditions of what constitutes a good omen.

What's become of the man who has been so loudly proclaiming for the last three months his antipathy to hot weather? Well, the last we saw of him he was trying to be neutral as between his furnace and his coal pile.

The new war revenue bill doubles the tax on attendance at moving picture theatres. If this is intended to keep more people at home, it is likely to fall of its object. It merely substitutes for a personal pleasure a patriotic duty.

If it wasn't for the looks of the thing and the criticism it would assuredly bring down the association of American humorists would certainly elect the entire German war press bureau honorary members, as men who have shown they possess the proper goods.

In the demands made by Germany upon Holland, in their recent squabble, was that the little kingdom furnish a certain amount of quinine each month. The kaiser must want it so as to make a little more palatable the pills the allies have been compelling him to swallow.

Over in Sioux City they are talking of removing a city councilman from office on the ground that he has been guilty of having too intimate relations with the underworld. Des Moines papers will be pointing this out as evidence of their belief that Sioux City is a throwback among cities anyway.

Spain is all heated up over the fact that while it has been very friendly towards the German government, the U boats would just as soon sink a Spanish merchantman as any other, and have done so. The kaiser's list of friends seems to be growing as small as his chance for coming out of the war with his crown on tight.

The bolshevist government of Russia has been tottering for so long now that it must be very close to the edge of the precipice. As an experiment in popular government it failed because the only lessons the common people of Russia have ever had the opportunity to learn were from the so-called nobility, and that is why they were unable to distinguish between liberty and license.

Nebraska Will Ratify

The prohibition forces of Nebraska won a splendid victory at the recent primary election.

Ratification of the national prohibition amendment was defeated at the special session of the Nebraska legislature last spring through the opposition of Governor Neville and eighteen wet senators, the house of representatives having passed the ratification resolution almost unanimously.

The good people of the state were disappointed and expressed their dissatisfaction so vigorously during the special session and since that time that about one-half of the wet senators who opposed ratification at the special session decided to retire from politics and did not stand as candidates for re-election, and of the one-half of the wet senators who did file for re-nomination, one-half of them were defeated at the primaries.

In twenty-two of the thirty-three senatorial districts there were no wet candidates nominated on either ticket. In the remaining eleven districts the dries will elect several of their candidates.

This insures the ratification of the national prohibition amendment by an almost unanimous vote, as the lower house will be overwhelmingly dry. This victory in Nebraska is the result of the fight by the dry forces in Nebraska two years ago for state prohibition, a most vigorous fight by the dry forces at the special session of the legislature last spring for ratification which put every member of the legislature on record, and the activity of the dry forces in placing dry candidates on the ticket in all districts throughout the state this summer and urging their nomination at the August primaries. Nebraska will take her place on the prohibition roll of honor January, 1919, by ratifying the national prohibition amendment.

THE NEBRASKA PRIMARY

The democratic primaries in Nebraska resulted in the re-nomination of the present governor. The democratic governor and eighteen wet state senators, almost all of whom were democrats, prevented the ratification of the national prohibition amendment at the special session of the Nebraska legislature last spring.

As the time approached for filing candidates for nomination on the state ticket, it developed that the reactionary element of the democratic party which was in control of the democratic state machinery was opposed to the democratic party taking a stand in its state platform in favor of the ratification of the national prohibition amendment although the state had adopted statutory prohibition the year before by thirty-thousand majority. It became apparent also that the reactionary democratic leaders were opposed to the party taking a stand in favor of specific, progressive legislation that would protect the producers and consumers against the profiteering that was so shamelessly and unconscionably being carried on in the state and which the state administration had made no effort to curb or prevent.

I became a candidate for the democratic nomination for governor for two purposes, first—to emphasize the importance of nominating and electing a state legislature that would be pledged to the ratification of the national prohibition amendment, and second—to suggest and discuss specific, progressive legislation that would not only protect the farmers and consumers of the state against the organized profiteering that was going on, but to outline a progressive legislative program that the progressive democracy of Nebraska could rally around when the reactionary liquor machine in the democratic party lost its chief cornerstone, by the ratification of the national amendment.

The primary vote in the state this year was very light, the democratic candidates for governor polling 17,500 less votes than they did at the primary two years ago. Of the shrinkage of votes at the democratic primary I lost about fourteen hundred more than my opponent, leaving his majority this year about that much more than it was two years ago. The reactionary liquor machine, whose vote is largely in the cities and towns, was held together this year in the hope that enough wet candidates for the legislature could be nominated to again postpone the ratification of the national prohibition amendment, and its vote was somewhat augmented by the activity of the insurance combine, the grain elevator combine and some other in-

terests against whose profiteering I had recommended specific legislation to curb. While my vote in the cities and towns was decreased over two years ago owing to the anti-profiteering fight which I was making, I made gains in the country, and but for an extremely light vote in the country, which was caused by the farmers being very busy in the fields, the results of the primary would have been different.

In the two years that the progressive democrats of the state have waged a fight against the distillers, brewers and saloonkeepers, great progress has been made. The state has adopted bona fide prohibition, and in the recent primaries there has been nominated enough dry candidates in the senate and house to give the dry forces more than a two-thirds majority in both branches of the next legislature.

The interference in democratic politics by the state and national liquor interests will be terminated with the ratification of the national prohibition amendment next January. The fight that has been begun in favor of specific, progressive legislation which will protect the producers and consumers against the profiteering of the special interests and that will enable the people to utilize the state governmental machinery for the purpose for which it was intended will be continued until the legislation outlined in the recent primary will have been secured.

CHARLES W. BRYAN.

LIQUOR TAXES SAVED

The liquor interests made no protest against a proposed levy of a billion dollar liquor tax in the war revenue bill. In fact, they favored it for the reason that they hoped it would postpone war prohibition and possibly bring about the defeat of the ratification of the national prohibition amendment in the state legislature this coming winter. Intimations were published in the daily and liquor press that the committees at work on the revenue bill would get a billion dollars revenue out of drink if war prohibition was postponed, and, if not, they would have to put new taxes on necessities—a bribe and a threat which will fail to influence congress or the administration.

The brewer, conducting his business on a cost-plus basis, knows that the liquor taxes are paid by the drinkers' wives and children, and those who in charity support them, and taxpayers who pay for the consequent crimes. Higher liquor taxes, like high license, only serve to entrench the booze business with plausible reasons for its continuance. Instead of suffering any losses by reason of failure to secure revenues from the liquor business, the American people will make a tremendous saving. Discussing this point, the Nebraska State Journal comments as follows:

"When America goes dry next year, what of the \$1,250,000,000 of revenue expected to flow from liquor taxes under the new revenue bill? Congress is disturbed over the prospective loss of that sum. But if that \$1,250,000,000 isn't collected from the liquor business, it will mean that the people have saved that amount. They will have saved not only that amount, which represents only a portion of the profits from the sale of liquor, but they will have saved the entire profit of the liquor men, together with the whole cost of running the liquor business. If the tax is \$1,250,000,000, the total saving should be at least three or four times that. If the revenue law is drawn properly, this three or four billions saved by the American people should yield something to the revenues by means of the income or profits taxes. A people who are saved three billions would hardly object to turning back a billion and a quarter of the saving for help with the war. The liquor tax isn't lost. It is saved."

The advocates of universal military service are not content to wait after the war is over before allowing the nation to decide whether it should adopt that as a permanent military policy or whether the necessity has passed. They are arguing that the improved physical condition of the youths who have been undergoing training is in itself a sufficient reason why the policy should be adopted. This improved physical condition is due to the fact that the government requires systematic exercise, provides the proper kinds of food, looks after their teeth, nails and feet, and requires the observance of stated sleeping and waking hours. They are better physically because of this regimen, and so would all of us. We would also all be better off if we did a good many other things that we know would be good for us mentally and spiritually, but this government is organized primarily for peace times, and not on strictly paternal lines.