

TRUTH ABOUT COUNTY OPTION

Nebraska Editors Are Exposing Deception and Fraud Practised.

SIMPLY COUNTY PROHIBITION

It Would Wipe Out Local Option and Destroy Home Rule--Voters Would Be Denied Right to Exercise Option--Could Vote Only Against License.

Thanks to Nebraska editors, the people are beginning to get a correct understanding of the true inwardness of so-called county option. Among other things they have discovered these facts:

1. That what is termed county option is misleading because it denies to the voter the power of option or choice.
2. That the use of the word option is done to deceive the voter, who as a rule is satisfied with the local option clause of the Slocumb law. He is led to reason that if local option is a good thing, logically county option would be as good.
3. Voters are learning that while local option under existing law insures the full measure of home rule, the intent of so-called county option is to destroy the right of home rule.
4. That so-called county option is diametrically opposed and antagonistic to local option.
5. That so-called county option is nothing but county prohibition.
6. That if the Anti-Saloon league should call it by its right name, it would be denounced at once by nine-tenths of the voters.
7. That the program of the league is to get the legislature to pass a law permitting the people of the whole county to control the policy of every town in said county by denying the right of townsmen to license the sale of liquor.
8. The scheme is to let voters in one end of a county say what the taxpayers of a remote town must do, although the outsiders pay no tax in such town, nor have they the slightest knowledge of its domestic affairs.
9. The scheme is to have voters cast their ballots against issuing licenses, but they would be denied the right to vote in favor of license. The injustice of this proposition is fully set out in the editorials quoted below.
10. That the Anti-Saloon league is exposed in an attempt to perpetrate a political trick upon confiding voters of Nebraska.

Coercing Candidates.

Here are two important news items relating to the impending campaign now being planned by the prohibitionists:

(From the Lincoln News.)
At Friday's meeting of the campaign committee for the allied temperance forces of Nebraska it was arranged to hold conferences by congressional districts within the next fortnight, when reports will be received from county workers on the declarations made by candidates for state offices, congress, the legislature and county attorney. Lists will be made up at each of the district meetings and forwarded to state headquarters in Lincoln, whence the announcement will proceed later as to which men are deemed friendly to county option and which ones are not accredited as champions of that idea.

(From the Beatrice Express.)
County option is made an issue in the pre-primary contest in every legislative district of the state. County option is recognized as a step toward state-wide prohibition and is supported everywhere by prohibitionists. It is proposed to so change the law that the voters over the county can have a voice in saying whether a town or city shall not license saloons. Legislative candidates for and against such a measure will therefore be pitted against one another in every district of the state and the result of the primary election will foreshadow the fate of county option in the next session of the Nebraska lawmakers. Prohibitionists and others favoring the proposed law will demand that each candidate define his position on that question, and those opposing county option will be equally as determined to know how a man aspiring to the legislature would vote on county option in case he should be awarded the honor. The candidates on each side are thus to be clearly understood and voters in the primary will take their choice.

Deception Shown.

Nebraska newspapers are discussing the merits of so-called county option. Most of them understand what it is, while others err in saying that the proposition contemplates that the people of a county may decide whether the sale of liquor shall or shall not be licensed. The truth is that voters would be permitted to vote only against license. The bill prevents the voter from voting for license, and hence he is deprived of the power of option in the matter. Therefore the term county option is a misnomer. The scheme is devoid of the quality of choice. It is one-sided and unfair. It is based upon deception and injustice.

Several Nebraska editors have

pointed out this political trickery of the prohibitionists in editorial utterances of great strength and clearness, as will be seen from the following quotations:

What is County Option?

(From the Boone County Advance.)
To quote "Clod Crasher," county option means that every voter in the county has a right to say whether saloons shall exist in said county or not. The object of this article is, first, to prove that "Clod Crasher" is mistaken—like nearly every other advocate of county option—and is simply endeavoring to mislead by telling only a portion of the truth; second, we shall endeavor to show exactly what county option is by quoting from the bill introduced at the last legislature.

The bill says:
"If a majority of all the voters voting at such election on such license question shall have voted in favor of granting license, then the no-license proposition shall be lost, PROVIDED, That nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit any city council, board of village trustees, or county board, from withholding license. THIS SAME AS IF THE QUESTION HAD NOT BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE COUNTY."

"If a majority of all the voters voting at such election on such license question shall have voted against granting license THEN no city council, village trustees, or county board, nor any other authority within such county, shall have power to grant license."
Thus it will be seen that those who are harping so much about the rights of the farmer are not willing to give him an opportunity to really settle the question of saloons for his county.

If a majority say that there shall be saloons in the county, the county optionist says that the farmer must then get out of the game and let the fellows in town decide the matter. On the other hand, if a majority vote should be against saloons in the county, then and in that case a town could not have a saloon, even though every voter in the corporate limits should be a high-license man.

Certainly, if the farmers have a right to say that a saloon shall not be established in a town, they also have a right to say that it shall be established. Tricky legislation of this kind can hardly hope to win.

County Option Clearly Defined.

(From the Schuyler Free Lance.)
In the first place, we want to give the News editor credit for admitting as to what county option really is and that it is not a matter of fighting some legal wrong, but is simply a scheme of prohibitionists to extend and enlarge their powers. If there could be state prohibition there would be no demand for county option, but fearing that the state will not adopt a prohibitive amendment, the prohibition faction accepts of county option as a step in their advance. Some counties might vote against saloon license wherein a town might not. So regardless of all argument used for or against county option, down underneath of all is simply the straight prohibition argument. County option is simply a step toward prohibition and nothing else.

But while nothing but the extension of prohibition is back of this county option agitation, that topic is not discussed in connection with it and our editorial friend of the News follows that line. He discusses certain alleged rights following taxation, just as all do instead of arguing for prohibition and saying in the support of county option that it would give the prohibitionists that much more leverage in keeping out the saloon.

Unjust and Un-American.

The advocates of county option throughout the state are making the argument that the voters of the whole county should be permitted to have a voice in controlling the domestic affairs of towns and villages in respect to the control of the liquor traffic. They are contending that to be longer deprived of a controlling voice in the domestic affairs of towns in which they do not live is, from their point of view, "taxation without representation, which is tyranny." On the other hand, townsmen whose property is taxed to pay the cost of local government, make use of the same quotation in support of their contention that since property owners outside of the corporate limits of a town do not pay taxes to maintain the local government, therefore they should not be given legal right to have a voice in such local government, for the reason that to give them such voice would grant them representation without taxation, and would be destructive of the principle of home rule, would be illegal, unjust and un-American. This brings up the point as to what were the considerations which made necessary the incorporation of a town or village into a body politic, separated or segregated from the control of the county government. The study of such considerations would carry the voter far away from arguments in favor of the principle of county option. It is apparent on its face that towns and villages were given the right to incorporate and to manage their own affairs for the sole reason that they had a right to the benefits of home rule and to be free from the domination of a larger number of voters throughout the county, who were not to be taxed to maintain the local government, and who, of course, could have no intimate knowledge of the wants of such incorporated town.

We believe that the people of a town alone should say what shall or shall not be done in that town, for they must bear the ills there may be. They alone pay the municipal taxes to provide police, police courts, jails, as well as to provide for school and municipal taxes necessary.

No End to the Fallacy.

If a city may grant a franchise to a street car company and in case of suit against that company the county must meet court expenses, would that justify the whole county in saying whether the city should grant a street car franchise or not?

District court cases arising from liquor traffic are appealed to the supreme court and the state at large has to care for criminals in penitentiaries and meet costs of insane care. Then on the same grounds the state at large should say as to saloons and not the county alone. In fact, there is no end to that fallacy and the federal court and juries would entertain the nation at large to say.

The fact is that the county at large meets much expense aside from courts and dependencies that are due to local affairs, but that does not justify the whole county regulating what is purely of local concern.

The simple fact and sensible view is that people of any incorporated town have the sole right to say what they will have or will not have in their midst and not outsiders, many of whom never even come to that town. The nearer you get the government to the people, the better it is and the fairer. And people who pay no municipal taxes or do not live in a municipality should have nothing to say as to what shall or shall not be in that place.

We believe in home rule, and county option is nothing of the kind. If the whole people of a county are to have the say as to saloons or no saloons in town, they can along the same line of reasoning say as to whether there shall be circuses or carnivals therein, whether there shall be sidewalks or street crossings or not or any other thing, for all may cost the county in some way as a result.

County option is supported by the prohibitionists because it is along their line and many county people will vote for it because it enlarges their authority without any extra expense, but it is wrong in principle just the same, for the good reason that it destroys home rule and kills local option.

A Sham.

(From the Scribner News.)
People can conscientiously believe in regulation by local option or complete prohibition. County option is a makeshift and a sham.

Hits Both Ways.

(From the Columbus Journal.)
The prohibitionists in their national convention scored both the old parties for refusing to incorporate a prohibition plank in their respective platforms. Had both the old parties adopted prohibition planks, the prohibitionists would have insisted that it was only a trick to deceive the so-called temperance element.

Don't Be Fooled.

(From the Pender Times.)
Don't be fooled by the proposition of county option. It means prohibition ultimately. If you favor prohibition a vote for county option means a vote for prohibition. This scheme has worked well in the south and the opponents of saloons expect the same results in the north. If the majority of the people of this state want prohibition, they ought to have it, but we believe there should be no deception in the proposition. The issue should be plain, open and above board.

Anti-Saloon League Hirelings.

Hon. H. L. Peeke, chairman of the national prohibition convention, in an address before that body arraigned the Anti-Saloon league in scathing language. The Ohio State Journal's report of the convention's proceedings gave the speech in full, and from its report this extract is taken from Mr. Peeke's remarks:

"The prohibition party asserts that the way to prohibit is to prohibit. And also asserts that it agrees with the Quaker Ohio senator, who was the author of the local option bill, in the assertion that the Anti-Saloon League workers do not desire such legislation as will cause them to lose their lucrative jobs, in most cases far more profitable to the holders than anything they have ever been able to earn in other walks of life."

The Anti-Saloon league, an organization existing mainly for the purpose of providing soft snaps for decayed lawyers and preachers who never earned in any other walk of life one-half the amount they receive from working the church people; my state always supports the republican candidate if it can possibly find an excuse for doing so, and generally succeeds in finding such an excuse, and then after election proceeds to vomit forth fire and sword, and tell what it is going to do to the very men that it has helped to elect."

In this connection it is well to copy a press dispatch reflecting some light on the situation in Pennsylvania:
"Pittsburg, Pa., July 23.—J. B. Corey, a wealthy coal man, one of the originators of the prohibition party and until this year one of the leading contributors, has withdrawn his support and over his signature repudiates the prohibition leaders. Mr. Corey today said:

"In the financial report of the chairman of the prohibition party of Pennsylvania there was a careful lack of detailed items, upon which \$29,000 was collected and expended. As a substitute for the detailed items there was an illuminous heralding of the great personal sacrifices the prohibition patriots are making. Yet I question if there is one of them who could realize as many dollars and cents in any legitimate business for the same mental and physical exercise."

Little Consolation.

(From the Schuyler Free Lance.)
The prohibitionists are getting little consolation out of the presidential candidates of the two old parties. Taft is a license man and is against prohibition and Bryan has declared the same way. He voted and talked against a prohibitive amendment in Nebraska in 1890.

Too Much Grandstanding.

(From the Silver Creek Sand.)
It is an incontrovertible fact that if the people of the community who are so industrious in fighting licensed saloons would direct their energies to ward fighting the sale of booze, no matter by whom, whether by licensed saloons, bootleggers or hole-in-the-wall dealers, they would have the support of many who now oppose them. There is altogether too much grandstanding play about the anti-saloon fighters. To be consistent they should tackle the rum element wherever it exists. A licensed saloon is a blessing to a community by the side of unlicensed and irresponsible traffickers in intoxicating liquors who trap the unwary, as the devil lures his victims.

A Question of Prohibition.

(From the Loup City Standard Gauge.)
Party lines will not be the question that will determine who will be elected this fall in Sherman county, but the question of prohibition will be decided by the vote of the people in the candidates chosen. We are strictly opposed to statutory prohibition, yet if the majority of our people say by their vote that they want it we are with them. We believe that our present liquor law is about as near the right thing as could be framed, if granting local prohibition to every community that desires it and so declares by its votes. At the next session of the legislature, the county option question will come up for our legislators to pass upon, therefore your vote will tell whether Sherman county is in favor of prohibition or not by the men you elect. Consider your ballot well before you cast it.

For a Square Deal.

(From Grand Island Independent.)
The York Republican, firmly advocating prohibition at all times, is yet against the county option law as a matter of principle. It believes the local option provided by the Slocumb law to be better legislation and as effective where people want prohibition as the county option law would be. Other advocates of prohibition are also opposed. If we mistake not, it is the Albion News, also an advocate of state-wide prohibition, which said: "If the cause of temperance cannot be promoted by fair, open and above-board methods, it does not deserve to succeed. This is true of all things. We have confidence in the people of this commonwealth and believe that the majority should rule. Every cause has its over-zealous friends, who do more harm than good, and such, we believe, are those who advocate an unfair bill such as the one above referred to."

Making Pledges.

(From the Grand Island Independent.)
The law proposed would put the question for such cities as Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, etc., up to the people of the entire county in which each is located, for the decision that it shall not permit licensing and regulating the traffic; but such counties could not determine that such cities should issue license to the applicant. The measure, in obviously most illogical and inconsistent manner, vests in the people of an entire county a right to vote upon a municipal question only if they vote one certain way. In other words, should the majority of the people of a county so far disregard the intention of the law as to vote for the licensing and regulation of the sale of liquor, then their interest in the action of the authorities of Grand Island or Wood River or Cairo ceases. They then have no interest in the municipality's affairs; they then are not concerned; they then would have no right to determine the question, but would immediately, by the virtue of the same law, be disfranchised.

It is scarcely a wonder then that the voters will want to know of the aspirants for nomination to legislative offices, how they are going to vote upon this measure if they are nominated at the primaries and subsequently elected.

The election of a majority of the voters of which desire to do so, must certainly be continued in the unconditional possession of the right to keep any saloon out of its limits. But the Slocumb law gives such communities this right. In fact, the Slocumb law provides for prohibition just as soon as the people of each respective community are ready for it, and want it. It ought not to be changed, directly or indirectly. It ought to be altered or supplemented neither in the interest of the distiller who would, if he could, make it more lenient, nor in the interest of the impatient, intolerant and unwise though probably well meaning reformer who would, because of some evils—evils which should be looked upon lightly by no one—go considerably farther than necessary to correct those evils, and would force upon many people who know how to control themselves restrictions which are obnoxious to them merely because a few people fall lamentably short in being masters of themselves.

The prospective candidate for a legislative nomination should therefore announce his position upon this question simultaneously with the announcement of his candidacy; for, assuredly, the voters upon both sides of the question have a right to know what they are voting for.

A Fair Law.

(From the Schuyler Free Lance.)
The Slocumb law is the fairest liquor law that could be, so why not let it alone? County option is but a scheme of the prohibitionists to work a little nearer to their desires in that line, not being able to get their full wishes.

Not a Party Issue.

(From the Battle Creek Enterprise.)
We agree with the Chronicle that county option is not a party question—it is far more. It is a vital issue which must be decided by the next legislature, and one in which every resident of Madison is directly or indirectly interested. It is a question which cannot be straddled and the people of Madison county are asking little when they insist upon an honest avowal from Mr. Beels or any other candidate.

A Few Facts.

(From the Schuyler Free Lance.)
Under county option the people of Schuyler would have the right to say whether Leigh, Clarkson and Howells should have saloons or not. And what is that to us who pay no town taxes in those villages and rarely, if ever, go there?
There is no use in any disguising of the fact that county option is supported by the prohibition element, because it is simply a step in that direction. So all the argument one can bring as to the justice or right connected with it amounts to nothing. County option will be favored by the prohibition element and opposed by the others.

The Real Contest.

(From the Hastings Daily Tribune.)
In Adams county the real fight is going to be made upon the prohibition issue—county option. Those who favor prohibition have perfected a thorough organization and they have placed candidates in the field to make the race in the primaries as favoring county option, while those who are opposed to prohibition and county option have also placed first-class men in the race, so while the primaries will be but lukewarm, the real contest will promise to be interesting enough for all concerned. The Tribune is opposed to county option and will have more to say on this important subject from time to time after the primaries.

County Option.

(From the Columbus Journal.)
Two years ago next January, when the legislature assembled, Thomas Darnell, attorney for the State Anti-Saloon league, drew up a bill and had it introduced, providing for county option. The bill was defeated. Since that time the league has been making a campaign to awaken interest on the county option question, and a number of republican papers advocate making the question of county option a partisan issue. Some of the county optionists have even gone so far as to serve notice that they will not vote for any candidate on the republican legislative ticket who will not pledge himself to vote for the county option measure.

The temperance question is not a partisan measure. A voter can still be a temperate man and consistently oppose the county option bill. The measure the county optionists demand is a one-sided affair, and is really not a local option measure in the true meaning of the term. It gives the voters an opportunity to vote on the question of licensing saloons, and if a majority of the votes cast are against license, that settles the question—a license shall not be granted. But if a majority of the ballots cast are in favor of licensing saloons, it would be fair, then, in that case, for the temperance advocates to abide by the result. The bill, however, provides for overriding the will of the voters, and the granting of licenses is optional with the village board and city council. The Central City Record is of the opinion that the local option measure is a good one, even if it does give the "temperance people an advantage over the saloon men." The stand taken by the Record has called forth a protest from Editor Ladd of the Albion News. The News says:

"If the cause of temperance cannot be promoted by fair, open and above-board methods, it does not deserve to succeed. This is true of all things. We have confidence in the people who compose this commonwealth, and believe that the majority should rule. If the majority does not at all times agree with our ideas, we do not despair or feel justified in resorting to unfair methods. The temperance cause, like all moral ones, must advance by degrees and a steady growth. It has been going forward at a rapid rate of late years, but it will be a long time before it reaches the stage we would like to see. Every cause has its over-zealous friends who do more harm than good, and such, we believe, are those who advocate an unfair bill such as the one above referred to. If the question of having saloons is to be settled by a vote of the people, then in all fairness a vote for should count just as much as a vote against. While the majority is not always right, it is much safer to trust than the minority as a general proposition. We would inform the editor of the Record that he has not been mistaken in considering us a 'strong temperance man.' We demand of others only what we are willing to concede. If a bill giving the saloons an unfair advantage were to be introduced in the legislature, the Record would denounce its unfairness, but thinks it all right when the advantage is on the other side. Such a policy will never gain friends and can never succeed."

Chafin for Nation-Wide Prohibition.

Lincoln, Aug. 7.—Eugene W. Chafin, prohibition candidate for president, in an address at the Nebraska Epworth assembly said he had little sympathy with the county option or any other movement looking to the oppression of the liquor traffic but full sort of nation-wide prohibition.

Running Night and Day.

(From the Beatrice Sun.)
A business man from Wilber who was in the city yesterday stated that the brewery at that place has been running night and day the last six weeks in order to fill orders received from Beatrice, Wynmore and other towns that went dry this spring. Every day large quantities of beer in cases and barrels are received here, saying nothing of the amount carried here in suit cases.

The Best Method.

(From the Wymorean.)
Business men throughout the state have organized what is known as the Merchants' and Manufacturers' association, and among other things that they advocate is regulation of the liquor traffic by high license, believing that this method is best for the business interests of the state. The association has taken space in leading papers throughout the state in which to present its side of the argument, which is for high license and local option. The association is in no way dominated by the liquor interests, as no one engaged in the traffic in any way can become a member.

Gauging the Business Men.

(From the Nebraska City News.)
Beatrice is a "dry" town, consequently the revenue of that city has been reduced. In order to help pay expenses it has been decided to increase the occupation tax of those doing business there, and among the number who come in for a "raise" are the real estate dealers. The city council is of the opinion that it is worth \$50 per year for the privilege of selling city lots there. That is one way to raise money, but we are inclined to coincide with the Lincoln Journal when it says it is a short-sighted policy to tax this class of people. The business of a real estate dealer is to put the price of property as high as possible, and when that is done the result is shown on the assessor's books. Live real estate men add much to the assessed valuation of a town and it is a mistake to drive them out of business.—Nebraska City News.

The More Honest Policy.

(From the Grand Island Independent.)
The legislative candidate who desires clear sailing and an easy conscience has but one thing to do this year: State his views fully before the primaries on the questions at issue in this state. If he is for home rule, for instance, with reference to the liquor question, permitting those communities which desire prohibition to have it and those which prefer to regulate the traffic to regulate, he must come out squarely for no change in the Slocumb law and in opposition to any county option bill. If he is for county option or for prohibition, all he needs to do is to say so. It will then be up to the people and the man who thinks he can side-step the question and get in under false colors is making a mistake. He may be able to sneak in, but uneasy will rest his head after he gets in and has voted contrary to the expectations of those who voted for him. And it's the more honest policy.

The Real Issue.

(From the Loup City Standard Gauge.)
This winter the question of county option will come up in the legislature, and if you are in favor of county option, if you are in favor of passing a law that gives one man a right to rule another though they live miles apart and their conditions and interests are directly opposite, if you are in favor of taking away the rights of John Doe because he lives in the same county you do and your vote controls him though you may never have seen him, if you are in favor of passing laws that will restrict your neighbor's liberties and that will some day lead to laws that will restrict your own, if you desire to take from your fellow man the liberty that God gave him when he made him, if you think it your duty to compel men by law to believe as you believe, if you desire to put men in office who are governed by prejudice, then vote for the candidate that will carry out such narrow views. But it is not likely that Sherman county will cast ballots enough for pious hypocrites to elect them.

For Better Enforcement.

Hundreds of business men have joined the Merchants' and Manufacturers' association under the following conditions:
"As business men and taxpayers we favor the movement to form an association of merchants and manufacturers for the purpose of adopting measures to bring about a better enforcement of the Slocumb liquor license law throughout the state—a law making it optional with the people of a town or city to say whether or not liquor shall be sold. We believe the said law has been of great benefit to the state and that there can be no better means for regulating the sale of intoxicants. We join this association with the understanding that no distiller, brewer, liquor dealer or saloonkeeper is eligible to membership. Our object is to protect property interests from the ill effects of unwary legislation."