

THE LOCAL SITUATION

Of course there is no reason why Lincoln should not be left to settle its own local questions without interference on the part of outsiders. It is quite true that Lincoln is the seat of several educational institutions, and that these institutions are attended by young men and young women from all parts of the state. But this is really no particular reason why we whose homes are in Lincoln, and whose taxes support the city government, should not be allowed to settle those little questions for ourselves. According to the opinion of Will Maupin's Weekly our anti-saloon friends and prohibition friends on the outside have no more warrant for butting in than have our other friends, the brewers. We say "our friends, the brewers," for Will Maupin's Weekly counts several good friends among those whose business it is to brew beer. But if outside anti-saloonists, and outside liquor interests will just stand to one side for a few weeks, we Lincolmites will settle this question one way or the other.

So far as this newspaper is aware no one whose opinion is worthy of consideration favors the open saloon as an institution. As a matter of fact everybody admits that as an institution it is a menace to society. It is tolerated merely because there are many who believe its presence and regulation is the best means yet devised of keeping within bounds the traffic in intoxication. There are those who believe that the best method of solving the liquor question is to enact laws prohibiting its manufacture and sale. That would be, provided the enactment of such a law would prevent the manufacture and sale. Fire is one of the worst enemies of society—as it is one of the greatest blessings—but we do not prohibit fire; we merely regulate it. And when we build cities we are not content with enacting ordinances prohibiting conflagrations. We set about building waterworks and organizing fire departments.

Of course there are those who are quite sure that there is only one side to the liquor question, and equally sure that all who oppose them are "whisky hirelings" and "brewery tools." These are so numerous in most communities that it seems impossible to make rational progress along temperance lines.

Will Maupin's Weekly does not belong to that class which believes that the saloon question is the paramount question in the present municipal campaign. It is merely an incident, and it should have no bearing whatever on the matter of selecting the men who shall have charge of municipal government during the coming two years. Whatever influence this newspaper may have will be used against any candidate for municipal office who is seeking votes on the ground that he is a "dry" candidate or a "wet" candidate. It will be used against any candidate who will not pledge himself to enforce, if elected, whatever excise policy a majority of the voters may decide upon. In the opinion of this newspaper it is little short of idiotic to select officials for a city like Lincoln upon the single and narrow question of "wet" or "dry." No man is worthy of municipal honors who will not abide by the decision of the majority and do his utmost to carry out the policy determined upon by a majority.

The "wet" and "dry" question should be settled apart from all other questions. Our

city officials should be selected with the view to their business ability, their integrity, their public spirit and their honesty. By "honesty" we do not mean their moral equipment, but their willingness to enforce the will of the majority.

In discussing candidates let us bear well in mind the fact that Lincoln is operating under the initiative and referendum, as applied to cities. Any official who, because of self interest or truckling to corporations, foists upon this city an obnoxious ordinance or franchise, will find himself unable to make good, for the people will have the opportunity to foil him. It would be well to keep this fact uppermost in mind at this time.

The first objection that was heard to Mr. Armstrong's candidacy was that he was president of the gas company. It is true that he is. This is not because Mr. Armstrong is a heavy stockholder in the company, nor because he is vitally interested in the business management. It is purely a matter of convenience for the company. The potential head of that company is Mr. Doherty, who is seldom here, and for business reasons it is necessary to have an official head here who can sign necessary papers and preside at meetings. Because of his business ability, his public spirit and his standing as a business man, Mr. Armstrong was selected for this position—honorary for the most part, and wholly nominal. Mr. Armstrong is not a candidate because he seeks either the office or the emoluments thereof. Those who know him—and no business man in Lincoln is better known—know that it will be a tremendous sacrifice on his part to make the campaign or officiate as mayor if elected. If he were interested in the gas company to the extent that it was the major portion of his business affairs, or so interested in its management that he devoted his time thereto, Will Maupin's Weekly would oppose his election with all its might. Knowing this is not the case, this newspaper will view Mr. Armstrong's candidacy wholly from the point of his ability, his business standing and his views upon those questions that affect the commercial interests of Lincoln. Moral questions as such are not matters of political moment. We do not pass laws for moral effect, but for the protection of society.

Alvin H. Armstrong is a successful business man. He is enterprising, full of public spirit, a large property holder and taxpayer and in favor of a larger as well as a better Lincoln. He believes that the excise question should be settled on its merits, and men elected because of their fitness and their willingness to enforce policies decided upon by the majority. The editor of Will Maupin's Weekly has known Mr. Armstrong for many years; their business relations have been more or less intimate and always peasant. Because of these facts Will Maupin's Weekly knows to its own satisfaction that Mr. Armstrong if elected, will do all that one bigbrained, business-like man can do to enforce the will of the majority, regardless of his own personal views. If elected and the city decides upon a "wet" policy, Mr. Armstrong will rigidly enforce a policy of regulation that will minimize the influences of the saloon. If the city decides upon a continuance of the "dry" policy, then Mr. Armstrong will be just as ready and just as earnest in his efforts to make that policy effective.

Frankly, Will Maupin's Weekly believes that Don L. Love is a very much misunderstood man. This paper confesses that its opinion of Mr. Love has undergone some radical changes during the past few months. He has been charged with being a fanatic on the "dry" policy, but this is a mistake. It is true that he has been diligent in his efforts to enforce the "dry" policy, and not always politic in his utterances on that question. But instead of denouncing Mr. Love for trying to carry out the will of the people expressed at the polls, he is rather to be commended highly. Mr. Love is not the issue. He stands for a great many things that Will Maupin's Weekly stands for, because he is fundamentally democratic—democratic in the broad sense, not the partisan sense. He believes wholeheartedly in the initiative, referendum and recall; he believes in the municipal ownership of municipal utilities; he believes in the establishment of a park and boulevard system and better school facilities. His misfortune is his constitutional inability to be a good "mixer" and his proneness to be somewhat pedantic. But he is a student of affairs without knowing men, a scholar without understanding what the average man has to contend with in the strenuous life, and a publicist who has as yet failed to measure some of the social undercurrents that produce the eddies and swirls upon the surface. Of Mr. Love this much must be said—he is a man of unswerving honesty of purpose, thoroughly in earnest in his efforts to work for the interests of the whole city, and able to devote all of his time and talents to the service of the people. What he might accomplish as mayor if surrounded by less narrowminded advisors, no one can tell, but Will Maupin's Weekly believes that it would have been of far more moment to Lincoln than what he has accomplished under his official environment.

Apart from his so-called "liberal views" the only objection to Robert Malone has come from a class that is much given to the belief that unless a man wears good clothes, talks pure English and patronizes a manicuring establishment he is unfit for public office. Being edited by a mechanic who has often worn overalls—with pride—and gone about with the grime of the shop upon face and hands, Will Maupin's Weekly has no patience with the views of this class. Robert Malone, handicapped by a lack of schooling, thrown into daily contact with the rougher elements of society, has made good as a business man. He is what he is because of his own unaided efforts. Lincoln has plenty of men who would be able to welcome a convention in polished sentences and wear a dress suit at public functions with great eclat. It has fewer men who are acquainted with those things that vitally affect the citizen and the taxpayer. Robert Malone belongs to the class of fewest numbers. He knows Lincoln; knows its municipal needs; understands its finances, and is acquainted with the needs of the larger class of its population—the men who work for wage. Lincoln, if "Bob" Malone were its mayor, might have occasion to blush because of his uncouthness, but it would not have occasion to blush for any business management of its affairs. And right now a majority of us are far more interested in business than we are in the tailor's model or the society swell.

Thomas Cochran's candidacy is, in the belief of Will Maupin's Weekly, a mistake,