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on the ground that county option would interfere with his sales and lessen his revenues, but the ordinary citizen is not interested in the profits of a brewery or a distillery or of liquor dealers, and I submit that the people who want the saloon ought to be satisfied to retain the saloon in counties that want them, without insisting that they shall exist in counties that are opposed to them. If the liquor interests insist that liquor shall be sold in a county even when a majority of the people of the county are opposed to it they can not complain if their logic is adopted by the opponents of the liquor traffic, and they object to liquor being sold in a county even when a majority of the people of the county desire it.

Another common argument, possibly the most common argument against county option is that it is a step toward prohibition. Several men have told me that they do not object to the principle of county option but that they are opposed to it because they think that the adoption of county option would immediately be followed by the adoption of state prohibition. It is hardly fair to oppose a thing that is right on the ground that if the thing that is right is adopted it may lead to the adoption of something that the person thinks is wrong. That sort of argument could be used to prevent the adoption of anything good, for even so good a thing as self government sometimes leads to the election of bad men and to the adoption of bad policies. No one can tell what may follow any given act, but it is possible for everyone to form an opinion as to the righteousness of a proposed measure. If, however, one is going to try to calculate the influence of one proposition on another he ought first to know the situation with which he has to deal. There are in this state a certain number of persons who call themselves prohibitionists, and who are opposed to the licensing of the sale of liquor at any time or under any circumstances. It is impossible to say just how many there are who take

this position. If we measure them by the vote cast for the prohibition ticket they do not amount to more than three or four per cent of the population. But let us suppose that there are in each of the other parties as many as there are in the prohibition party. The number would not then amount to more than 12 1/2 per cent of the voters of the state. There are at the other extreme a certain number of persons who are opposed to any restriction being placed upon the sale of liquor. They oppose any regulation, whether it refers to hours of closing, method of conducting the saloon, or the conduct of those in charge of the business. It is difficult to say how many there are of these, but let us suppose that they are equal in number to the prohibitionists, that is, that they amount to 12 1/2 per cent of the voters. If these estimates are not accurate they are at least sufficient for the purpose in that they present the extreme views. If we may estimate that 12 1/2 per cent of the voters of the state are opposed to the licensing of the sale of liquor anywhere, and that 12 1/2 per cent are in favor of saloons everywhere, the two together would constitute one-fourth of the voting population. The intermediate group, constituting three-fourths of the voters, believe that the use of liquor is often abused, and that liquor if sold at all ought to be sold under such restrictions as will reduce the evils of intemperance to a minimum. These people do not agree with either extreme. They do not believe that the licensing of a saloon is necessarily immoral and they do not believe that all restrictions upon the sale of liquor are an infringement upon personal liberty. They deal with the conditions which they have to meet and favor such legislation as they believe to be wise. These are the people whose votes decide the policy of the state and the policy in different communities.

There are a great many people who would be opposed to a saloon in their block who would not vote to exclude all saloons from their town. There are people who would vote against any saloon in their town who would not vote to prevent other towns in their county from having saloons. There are those who would vote to drive saloons out of their county and yet would not be willing to prohibit all saloons in the state, or to prohibit other counties from having saloons. If a prohibitionist says that county option would immediately lead to state prohibition there is no reason why anyone should accept his statement as true unless the reasons given by him are sound ones. An examination of the situation leads me to believe that county option instead of hastening state prohibition would delay it. I believe that the defeat of county option would be more likely to hasten state prohibition. In 1890 the opponents of prohibition pointed to the fact that Nebraska had one of the best local option laws in the United States, and the merits of that law were spread before the people in every community. But a great deal of progress has been made since that time. County option has been adopted in a great many states, even in states like Ohio with her great cities and many breweries, and in states like Kentucky with her great distilleries. The state of Illinois which contains the second city of the union, and many other large cities, now has township option, which is a step in advance of Nebraska. Nebraska is behind the times. If the question of state prohibition were presented today it could not be opposed on the ground that we have the best license system in the union. The opponents of the amendment would have to bear the blame of having prevented county option, and of having defeated a measure intended to enforce the law against treating.

But, you ask, why are prohibitionists in favor of county option if it will delay state prohibition? There are two answers to the question. In the first place, the prohibitionists are helpless without the aid of a much larger group of voters who do not call themselves prohibitionists. It is not sufficient therefore to ask what the prohibitionists prefer, for until they are in a majority they must take not what they would like best but that which they can secure, and county option is the thing which they think they can secure. But there is another explanation of their position. Like those who favor other reforms they think it wiser to take a part of the loaf now than to risk delay in getting the whole loaf. They will not refuse county option even if they would prefer state prohibition. They will even take county option with the knowledge that it will delay state prohibition rather than refuse county option and risk the rejection of state prohibition. They act

upon the principle usually adopted when one is dealing with a thing which he believes to be right. Whatever his views about ultimate remedies he favors any remedy that promises to reduce the evil. If you ask my own opinion it is this, that county option instead of hastening state prohibition will be, when adopted, the main argument used by the opponents of state prohibition. They will say we have county option, that saloons can be closed in any county, and will ask why should we go further? In the campaign against county option the very men who opposed the 8 o'clock closing will use that law as an argument against county option. They will admit that it is a good law, and insist that with that law the liquor dealer is sufficiently restrained.

But I have no thought of entering into an elaborate discussion of the question of county option. I only touch upon the subject because I find that it is fear of county option that has led some to oppose the initiative and referendum. When that question is up I shall discuss it more at length, but I would much prefer to have the discussion of it postponed for two years, so that we can discuss and settle the question of the initiative and referendum now.

But I can not allow this opportunity to pass without calling the attention of the democrats of the state to the strength of a moral issue, and I know of no better place to emphasize this than Omaha. It is now less than two years since the legislature passed the 8 o'clock closing law. It was not in the platform of either party, and I believe a majority of the democrats of both houses voted against it, but the measure came before the governor for his signature or veto. A special train went from Omaha to Lincoln to carry a crowd of protesting democrats. They brought every possible pressure to bear on the governor. They told him that he would ruin his own chances for re-nomination and re-election if he signed the bill; they told him that he would ruin the chances of the party in the state, that he would greatly disturb the city of Omaha, and greatly injure the state. But in spite of pressure he signed it, and then the wrath of the city was turned against him. When the president of the United States visited Omaha the governor was not invited to attend the banquet. There was room at the table for some of the prosperous brewers, but not room enough for the governor of the state. It looked for a while as if the governor would have to make a circuit around Omaha when going east, but within two years the governor's act has been vindicated. The opposition to the 8 o'clock closing law has disappeared, and even the saloon keepers are compelled to admit that a hard drinker can, if he works industriously, become drunk enough by 8 o'clock to last him all night. The governor is stronger because he signed it, the democratic party is stronger because it was a democratic governor who refused to be frightened by the opponents of the law. Let the vindication of the moral principle involved in the 8 o'clock closing law be a warning to those democrats who think it safe to make the democratic party trail along at the tail end of the liquor procession. There is a moral sense that we can not afford to offend; there is a public conscience that we can not afford to defy. If the modern Pharaoh, the liquor interests, will not let the people go; if the people are to be denied the right to vote on public questions merely because they may want to vote on the liquor question, let the fate of the ancient Pharaoh be remembered. The democratic party has many members in it who use liquor to a greater or less extent and many of those democrats may be opposed to driving the saloon from their town, or their county, or their state, but these democrats are interested in other things besides drinking. They are believers in free government, they are interested in national politics, and they believe in the right of the people to rule. They are not in favor of the dark-lantern methods that are being employed in this state, and they are not willing to surrender their views on all subjects in order to gratify the men who make money by cultivating the appetite for drink.

I still hope that we may have a special session of the legislature and secure the submission of the initiative and referendum, but if that is made impossible by the sordid interests that have thrown themselves across the path of this popular measure, then our first business is to remove this obstruction, and with the next democratic convention as the forum we shall invite the champions of the breweries, distilleries and liquor dealers to show cause why they shall not be driven from politics in the state of Nebraska.