

insurance tables. No city can afford to allow an institution to be built up that can not live except as it lessens the productive value of the people of the town. We would not license an institution to spread disease among hogs; why license saloons to spread disease among men, and, by depraving this generation, close the door of hope to children before they see the light of day?

THERE IS A MORAL ARGUMENT

The economic argument should be convincing even to those who are not open to the moral argument; but there is a moral argument. There is an awakening in this country; the conscience of the people is being aroused, and the voters are beginning to recognize the moral responsibilities assumed by those who vote for the licensing of the liquor traffic. You are going to have a chance in this congress to vote on the licensing of saloons in the District of Columbia; you may have a chance to vote on the question of submitting a prohibition amendment to the people of this country. Let me ask you to remember the responsibility that one takes upon himself who votes on the side of the saloon. There are three things that the saloon needs besides customers; it needs the capital to run it; it needs the liquor to sell; and it needs the votes that bring it into existence. The saloon can not live without votes. The votes are as necessary as either the capital or the liquor. The man who furnishes the capital receives his pay in dividends, and his name is sometimes written above the door. The man who furnishes the liquor receives his profit on the liquor, and you sometimes see his advertisement out in front of the saloon. The man who furnishes the votes is the silent partner. And what does he receive? Nothing but the disgrace of being a partner and sharing moral responsibility for the harm that the saloon does.

I take it for granted that no member of congress would do a thing that he is ashamed to write down and make a matter of record. Let me suggest, therefore, a way in which you may put yourself to the test before you vote to license a saloon anywhere. Take a pen and ink and a piece of paper and write down—"I (your name) know that the saloon is an evil, and I do not know who will conduct the saloons that will come into existence as a result of my vote, but, without knowing who the saloon-keepers will be and knowing that the saloon is an evil, I hereby declare my willingness to share moral responsibility with those men, whoever they are, for any harm that they may do in the conduct of their business," and then sign your name to it, and read it to your wife, and then frame it and hang it on the wall!

I say to you, my friends, that the time is coming—is near at hand—when the American people will refuse to become partners with those who are in the liquor business.

The only arguments that they make today are: First, that the government needs the revenue. That argument can be used in favor of the licensing of any evil. Someone has suggested that burglars would give a larger percentage of their collections, and the burglar only takes loose personal property, while the saloon takes from the home, husband, father and son, and would take wife, mother and daughter if it could; and the saloons kill a hundred where the burglar kills one.

The second argument is that you can not enforce the law. Can they by such threats induce you to become partners with those who boast of their lawlessness? We have very few anarchists in this country, as they are usually described—men who carry red flags, march in parades and speak on street corners, and they do not have much influence. The real anarchists in number and in power are the men who stand behind the liquor interests, and who tell you in advance that they will defy your government and disobey your laws. These men ask you to be their partners in this lawlessness!

Every big question as last becomes a political question. The parties may try to avoid it, but do not let them delude you by telling you it will disturb the harmony of the party to oppose the saloon. I need not tell you that the saloon disturbs the harmony of the party whenever you attempt to do anything towards regulating it. If they are closing at twelve o'clock at night, and you want them to close at a quarter to twelve o'clock, you have a contest on your hands; they

all profess to believe that the liberty of the country is in danger. We had a fight in Nebraska over closing at eight o'clock, and one man, doubtless conscientious in his position, and very much alarmed for fear the rights of the people would be invaded, kept count of the votes as they were cast, and when he found that a majority had voted for the law, he threw up his hands and exclaimed, "My God, the light of liberty has gone out!"

Are you afraid of disturbing the harmony of the party? As far back as 1908 the liquor interests were active in several states; they cast their votes according to their interests on the liquor question. In the state of Indiana this year the liquor interests went into our state convention, and, in spite of the protests of two democratic candidates for the senate and a democratic candidate for governor, they forced a wet plank into the democratic state platform of Indiana; and after they had smeared our party with the slime of the saloon, they voted the republican ticket! That is what you can expect always; they will disgrace the party as long as they stay in it and desert it whenever they can not control it.

I owe all I am or hope to be politically to the democratic party. No man who ever lived in this country was more indebted to a party than I am to the democratic party. It took me when a young lawyer in Nebraska, without a name that was known, and without fortune. It made me a candidate for congress, and after that a candidate for president; three times the democratic party has given me the nomination, and it never cost me anything to be nominated for president. They have made it possible for me to accomplish whatever I have been able to accomplish, and I would not be true to that party if I was not willing to take any risk to save my party from being buried in a drunkard's grave.

If you want to know what party is to control the future, you must find out what party is drawing the young men from the colleges and schools, for the young men who enter the party today will dominate it tomorrow. The democratic party can not appeal to the young men of this country if it allows itself to become the champion of the brewery, the distillery and the saloon. Twenty-three states have already gone dry, and in the last campaign at least four more indicated their endorsement of prohibition. Before 1920 more than thirty states out of forty-eight will be dry. Today a majority of the people of the United States live in dry territory. Today a majority of the representatives in the house have already voted in favor of a national amendment. If there is any moral force in the doctrine that the people rule, then, when a majority of the people, speaking through a majority of their representatives, have declared against the saloon, it is, from that day on, an outlaw, and God forbid that my party shall be the champion of an outlaw!

We glory in the last campaign. We not only won all that we fought for, but we got a great deal thrown in that we did not expect. One of the richest blessings that came with this election was the fact that it set the democratic party free from obligation to the liquor interests. The great wet cities were willing to turn this government back to the predatory interests, and it was left to the prohibition states of the west and south to save the party and the nation from the wet cities of the east. We had seventeen of the twenty-three dry states. We had ten of the twelve states where women vote.

A QUESTION FOR DEMOCRATS

What shall we do in the next campaign? Shall we repudiate the people who gave us our victory, and cast in our lot with those who tried to defeat us? Shall we part with these friends who saved us, in order to ally ourselves with those who would have annihilated us?

Now that is the position of the democratic party. But, while taking the prohibition side is an opportunity to us, it is a necessity to the republican party. The republicans lost out on the old issues; they must find some issues that will win back the states that have, until this year, been republican. What issues have they? None, except the prohibition issue. We are likely to have a rivalry between the democrats and republicans, to see who will get there first!

And, if you will pardon me, I shall tell you a story that some of you who live in the cities may not understand, but will be understood by

those who live in the country; it illustrates the proposition that, when one party starts on this subject, the other must, because neither party can afford to have the other discharge its liquor element upon it.

The story is this: A farmer went to a veterinary surgeon to get some medicine for a horse that had a sore throat, and the doctor gave the farmer some powder and a long tin tube. The man went out with the powder and tube, but came back in a little while looking very much dilapidated.

"Did you follow my instructions?" inquired the doctor.

"Doctor, I tried to," said the farmer. "I put the tube down the horse's throat, as you directed, the end of the tube at the place that was sore, and I was just about to blow the powder onto the diseased part, when the horse coughed and I took the medicine!"

Now it makes a great deal of difference which party blows first on this subject! If the democrats take the lead they will drive the men interested in the liquor traffic into the republican party. Then the republican party will get all our bad men, and, goodness knows, they have enough bad men now without ours. But, if they blow first, we will get all their bad men, and we haven't room for any more! These men stand together; they know no loyalty to party; they have no interest in anything except the amount they can make selling a thing they know to be injurious. If they will combine against the home in favor of the saloon, why should we not combine for the home against the saloon?

THE PARTY OF THE PEOPLE

The democratic party is the party of the people, and the home is the people's citadel. The democratic party can not afford to be untrue to the home, the unit of society. Therefore, when the line is drawn, there is but one thing for the democratic party to do, and that is to take the moral side of this question. I present it to you as the gospel of right; it is also the gospel of expediency.

The democratic party has outlived the taunt that it is a whiskey party; it is perfectly respectable now for a democrat to drink no liquor at all. A majority of the states that are dry go democratic at every election. I appeal to you as democrats, democrats who love your party, democrats who want to put your party on the highway to success—I appeal to you to put the democratic party on the side of the mother, the child, the home and humanity, and not allow it to be made the champion of the most mercenary, the most tyrannical group that ever entered politics for the purpose of debauching parties and corrupting government. I thank you.

(Mr. Bryan finished speaking at 1:25 a. m., after which the banquet meeting was informally adjourned.)

OPPOSED TO LIQUOR DOMINATION

Department of Labor
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Washington

December 21, 1916.

Hon. W. J. Bryan,
c/o The Commoner,
Lincoln, Nebraska.

Dear Mr. Bryan:

In answer to your call through The Commoner, my name is at your service (so far as it can be used with propriety in view of my present official connections) for promoting your campaign against the alcoholic-beverage ring.

While I have never been in sympathy with the policy of regulating or abolishing the liquor traffic for sumptuary reasons, I am in favor of doing away with it root and branch, in the interest of clean politics.

The liquor ring is the left bower of invisible government. It travels in couples with the financial ring referred to as "Wall Street." It masquerades as democratic in the open (to the injury of the democratic party) and deals with republican rings in secret to the demoralization of both parties and the great injury of the government. When you kill the liquor ring you divest the interests of most of their political power.

Most heartily yours,

LOUIS F. POST.

The Don't Worry club has an excellent chance to increase its membership materially by circulating the various gentlemen who have aspirations to become speaker of the next house.