

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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The Battle Royal

The submission of the prohibition amendment to the federal constitution is the beginning of the greatest political battle of the present generation—a fight to the finish contest between the saloon and the home. There can be no doubt of the final ratification of the amendment but it would be unwise to underestimate the strength and strategy of the opposition. "The saloon," it has been aptly said, "has no defense but many defenders," and these defenders, conscious of the weakness of their cause, will not risk an engagement in the open. No serious attempt will be made to justify the existence of the saloon, and little will be said about "personal liberty." No, the old arguments are gone; they have been practically abandoned. An entirely new lot of reasons will be put forward to mislead the friends of prohibition—reasons which have no weight whatever with those who advance them.

First and foremost is the "state's rights" argument—that it would jeopardize the reserved rights of the states to put the enforcement of prohibition in the hands of the federal government. This is the saloon's first line of defense, but the enemies of alcohol have already gone "over the top" of this, for they have won the support of the south, which is most jealous of encroachments upon the reserved rights of the states. The states that want prohibition are glad to have the federal government assist in its enforcement. The people of the south prefer a federal official who protects their boys to a saloon that menaces their homes.

The second reason now relied on to defeat the amendment may be described as the "trench argument," namely, that prohibition would cause dissension among the people and prevent a united support of the government. One bomb filled with facts will demolish this trench, and here are a few of the facts. The injury done by the saloon is greater than any harm that could come from the open opposition of the liquor dealers when they are disarmed by the closing of the rum shop; and then, too, it is easier to convict them of lack of loyalty than to overcome the evil their business does.

As for the irritation of those who drink, that will be turned into thanksgiving as soon as the drink habit is broken—not to speak of the joy in the families of the reformed.

Let every friend of prohibition do his part. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League will continue their non-partisan efforts, and the prohibition party will keep up its fight. But these are not enough—the dry Democrats should organize in every doubtful state, and the dry Republicans should do likewise. And all the organizations should co-operate in the selection of legislators favorable to ratification.

Until this paramount issue is disposed of advocates of the saloon will stand together regard-

THE ROLL OF HONOR

List of States That Have Ratified the National Prohibition Constitutional Amendment

1—MISSISSIPPI, January 8, 1918.
2—VIRGINIA, January 11, 1918.
3—KENTUCKY, January 14, 1918.

less of party, and the friends of the home can not afford to permit difference of opinion on other subjects to divide them on this issue. They should support candidates pledged to ratification as against any who are opposed to it, or who are unwilling to pledge themselves.

Put none but the trustworthy on guard.
W. J. BRYAN.

"LIGHT IN THE EAST"

Premier Lloyd George's statement of the terms on which Great Britain and her allies are willing to negotiate is the first "light in the east." The dove leaves the ark when belligerent nations begin to exchange views as to terms of peace, and each day is likely to add to the chances of an agreement. The United States is prepared to continue the war—better prepared than any other nation—but the American people will rejoice when the object of the war is attained and a just peace secured.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE TRIUMPHS

The world moves! Woman suffrage triumphs in the house of representatives. It had a bare two-thirds—but ENOUGH. The democratic vote stood 104 to 102—a majority for the amendment. The republicans made even a better showing—165 to 33. Now for the senate—may it do as well.

MISSISSIPPI FIRST

Mississippi has won top place on the roll of honor by being first to ratify the prohibition amendment. Virginia and Kentucky followed close in order. And all democratic states, too. Next!

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A Move Toward Peace

The President's statement of terms, which will be found on another page, is a long step toward peace and will greatly cheer those whose relatives have been called to the colors. It will undeceive the German people, who have been led by the war party to believe that they were compelled to fight for their very existence. The war aims of the United States are not a menace to the German people—they are, on the contrary, an expression of the hope universal—the hope of the friends of peace and liberty everywhere.

There can be no permanent peace so long as subject races are held in political bondage and exploited by the stronger nations. "Government by the consent of the governed" is the growing political principle of the age; it is destined to control all governments. Opposition to this principle is responsible for much discord and many wars.

"Let the people rule," is a slogan for which our people can afford to stand—those who advocate this doctrine are traveling toward the dawn.
W. J. BRYAN.

UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING

"The subject of universal military training continues to be discussed in the country. The department has not sought and does not now seek legislation on the subject, chiefly for the reason that the formulation of a permanent military policy will inevitably be affected by the arrangements consequent upon the termination of the present war. Civilized men must hope that the future has in store a relief from the burden of armament and the destruction and waste of war. However vain that hope may appear in the midst of the most devastating and destructive war in the history of the race, it persists—perhaps because we are encouraged by the analagous substitution of courts for force in the settlement of private controversies; perhaps because all the perfections of nature teach us that they are the product of processes which have eliminated waste and substituted constructive for destructive principles. When a permanent military policy, therefore, comes to be adopted, it will doubtless be conceived in a spirit which will be adequate to preserve against any possible attack those vital principles of liberty upon which democratic institutions are based, and yet be so restrained as in no event to foster the growth of mere militarist ambitions or to excite the apprehension of nations with whom it is our first desire to live in harmonious and just accord."

The above quotation is from Secretary Baker's last report.

The secretary is exactly right. It is impossible to plan with intelligence for the days after the war. Everything depends on the prospect of permanent peace.

If the victory of the allies is as complete as we hope for and expect it ought not to be necessary to burden our people with universal military service; the urging of such a system now suggests a lack of faith in the overthrow of the militarism that menaces the world.

W. J. BRYAN.