

# Prohibition a Great Success in Nebraska

[From the Nebraska State Journal, May 1.]

One year ago today Nebraska climbed upon the water wagon. Statewide constitutional prohibition, backed up by a strict prohibitory law passed by the legislature, went into effect. The state as a whole, after the experience of one short year, is so firmly fixed upon the water wagon, according to public opinion expressed everywhere, that nothing short of an earthquake can shake it from its position on the front seat.

One year ago today the grog shops were closed for good in Nebraska. The unsightly sights and the obscene scenes that accompanied that closing in some portions of the state will long be remembered by men and some women who participated, and by sightseers who looked on. The bar as a barrier that separates a fool and his money, segregates him from his brains, his honor and his health, was gone from the state. The few saloon keepers who were not the abject slaves of the brewers and other holdup men, drove away from the so-called bright spots in their automobiles to their new houses or to the farms which they had bought with the earnings of the foolish ones, and retired from active business. The other kind of saloon keepers became tramps wandering in the few remaining wet states looking for a good location, there to begin anew their slavery for the manufacturers of liquor, providing the latter would stake them to a permit to sell the stuff. Some who had robbed both the brewer and the consumer, retired too, with the intention of living happily ever after in spite of the thoughts they may think in their sober moments.

The poor befuddled consumer, the old sot who could drink or let it alone, laid in a "reasonable amount" allowed under the law, if he had the money, but it was soon gone. He either drank it himself or his friends got it from him by inviting him to go hunting rabbits or on a fishing trip. The man with a bottle was popular as long as the thing held a drop. When the bottom was reached, when all was gone, when the tremors began to work, when the sot was afraid to be left alone in the dark, it occurred to most of them that they could let it alone, and they are now doing it. So far as heard from few of the old soaks died because booze was denied them. Not so many prominent men were laid to rest from what the death certificate charitably termed "heart failure," after prohibition went into effect as before.

Business men in cities and villages found no place to put their feet or rest their elbows, so they paid more attention to their business opportunities. Workmen who wore dirty rags and had no money to clothe their families or feed them, found after a time that they could dress better and provide for their families and were no longer afraid to look the world in the face. Many a man found he was able to support two pairs of shoes where one had been plenty.

Some of the highly paid mechanics who had never a cent of their wages left on Monday morning, are now clothed in fine linen and drive their own automobiles, the blear has left their faces and they look respectable and happy. In fact there is a paleness on the faces of Nebraska men that sometimes gives a shock to observing physicians who like to diagnose from sight, but invariably these diagnosticians make up their minds that it is the natural color of the human being who does not light up with booze. They say crimson, carmine and purple are in fact not flesh colors, that these lithographic tints are wholly artificial, indicative of hob nail livers, ruined digestion, poor circulation, diseased kidneys, congestion of the brain and empty pocket books.

Every kind of business except the dens and professions that fed on the weakness of men filled with booze began to thrive in Nebraska. It began to show in the looks and appearance of the people gathered in public places, in stores, in the schools, and in happier homes. The divorce courts, the juvenile courts, the domestic relations courts, suddenly lost business and bank deposits began to mount higher and higher. One year on the water wagon for a whole state has had its effect and the effect has been observed by the observing.

## WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DID.

The federal government has backed up the state of Nebraska in making its prohibitory law

## ONE YEAR OF PROHIBITION IN NEBRASKA

One year ago today the saloons were closed in Nebraska, obeying an amendment to the state constitution adopted in November, 1916, by a majority of almost 30,000. Inquiry in widely separated communities reveals the presence of almost no opposition to the new policy. Almost invariably the report is of reasonable enforcement of the law, fewer police court cases, better collections, increased bank deposits, and better social order generally. It is conceded that improved business and financial conditions may be due largely to high prices and good crops. Better social order can be charged almost wholly to the closing of the saloons. Thus the special public prosecutor at Omaha gives these as the results of the first year of prohibition in that city:

- A reduction of 50 per cent in total police court arrests.
- Heavy reduction of number of charges of wife beating and non-support.
- Decrease in appeals for relief from poor debtors.
- Vagrancy reduced to a minimum.
- Omaha workhouse abandoned because not needed.
- County jail prisoners reduced in number 50 per cent.

The figures from Grand Island are equally impressive. Police court records show less disorder and drunkenness, fewer petty crimes, and a decrease in immorality. The number of arrests on such charges has been cut more than 70 per cent. During the period from May 1, 1917, to April 25, 1918, the total arrests for intoxication and connected charges was 14. In the same period for the preceding year the number was 492. From May 1, 1916, to April 25, 1917, the last wet year, the number of arrests for drunkenness and disorderly conduct was 296 as compared with 37 in the period the city has been without saloons. Arrests on immoral counts dropped from 118 to 38. Only nine assault cases have been docketed in police court in the past year, whereas there were 33 assault cases during the previous year.

In Lincoln the arrests for drunkenness in the single month of September, 1916, were virtually the same as in the entire first year under prohibition. The number of criminal cases in the district court was almost cut in two.

Other cities and towns have the same story to tell, the figures showing so striking a uniformity that it would be tiresome to repeat them. The first year has been so great a success for the new policy that its effect on the state is no longer seriously discussed. — Nebraska State Journal.

more effective by the passage of a statute which makes it an offense and attaches a penalty for transporting liquor from a wet state to a dry state. Since last May when the bone dry law went in force in the state forty-five cases against "whiskey runners" have been filed in the Lincoln district of the United States court. Of this number thirty-five convictions were secured. Of the other remaining cases some have been dismissed and others are still pending. The federal grand jury found indictments against several persons for conspiracy to violate the Reed amendment, as the federal statute covering liquor cases is known. These persons have not yet been brought to trial. In all but a few instances offenders against the statute have been given jail sentences instead of fines.

## EFFECTS OF PROHIBITION IN LINCOLN

"Perhaps there has been less change in Lincoln than in some other places with the closing

of saloons, but there is no comparison here with the conditions of old. There is no crime and poverty in Lincoln like that that flourished in the palmy days of liquor and the segregated district.

"When I note the results I am ashamed that I ever was lukewarm in the matter of prohibition for booze. If ever a thing was detrimental to a community it was booze. It brought on starvation and strife; filled the penitentiary and the insane asylums; brought hunger to the little children and the wives in the home; caused murder and every crime in the list.

"The saloon was a loafing place for men where time and money was spent; where energy was dissipated and the moral fibre broken down. In the days of the open saloon pay days were busy days for the police. Saturdays and holidays were busy days. The police had to fight their way through mobs of drunken men frequently to get a man wanted. On Christmas day this year the matron and I policed the city while the patrolmen enjoyed a day off.

"The police roll has been reduced, and the merchants have cash in their drawers where they once had bad bills. Prohibition has emptied the city jail, has brought cheer to the children in the homes and dissipated the fear of the wife. It has made men of bums where booze made bums of men."—James Malone, Lincoln chief of police.

## REVENUE LICENSES DECREASE

An Omaha dispatch, dated May 1, says: The most striking effects of prohibition are seen in the office of the federal revenue collector. Where receipts for government taxes were formerly issued by the hundreds, during the current year but sixty have been issued. So far as a cursory inspection of these go, they apparently are all issued to druggists. The number of permits issued to Omaha druggists is 12, while four were issued to Lincoln druggists, three to drug men in Grand Island, and one each in Scottsbluff, Valentine, Fremont, Beatrice, David City, Aurora, Norfolk, Kearney, Geneva, Neligh and Bayard.

Hundreds of druggists in the state no longer deal in any liquors coming under the federal law. This law makes it necessary for them to pay a license fee where the stuff handled has over a half of 1 per cent alcohol in it.

## PROHIBITION IN OMAHA

From a report made by T. J. McGuire, special prosecutor, under date of April 30, the following facts are taken:

"The social evil, at least that section which set itself up in luxurious houses and in established localities, has been eliminated in Omaha.

"The total number of police court arrests for the past year will show approximately a decrease of 50 per cent as compared with the year previous.

"The records will show a heavy falling off of the number of men arrested and charged with wife-beating or non-support of their families.

"The records of the legal aid department of the board of public welfare show a remarkable decrease in the appeals for relief from poor debtors.

"Vagrancy, which formerly kept our jails crowded, is now reduced to the minimum.

"As a result of these conditions, developed by the enforcement of prohibition law in Omaha and Douglas county, the city administration was able some months ago to abolish the city work house because of the fact that there were not enough prisoners to keep the place clean and to occupy the care of five employees, who were needed to operate the workhouse before prohibition.

"In the county jail, where prior to prohibition there were often 200 or more prisoners on an average, the number was cut to less than 100."

## EFFECT ON BUSINESS

A report covering the effects of prohibition on business says:

"Business men, big and little, say that the effect has been marked in many lines; and trade