

Shipbuilding Record Disproves Beer Plea

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When Edward N. Hurley, chairman of the United States shipping board, expressed fears to congress last week, that a nation-wide ban on booze would retard shipbuilding, hundreds of brawn patriots who are pounding out ships in Camden in record time replied:

"Tell it to Tommy Mason!"

Tommy Mason was superintendent of the construction work on the Tuckahoe, the naval collier turned out of the yards of the New York Shipbuilding company in twenty-seven days, breaking a world's record.

After the launching of the Tuckahoe, Charles M. Schwab, director of the shipping board, sought Mason to learn how he and his men had made such phenomenal speed.

"I want to pass your secret along to the other shipyards," said Schwab.

"No booze," replied Mason. "That's the secret."

Schwab didn't testify before the congressional committee last week in the hearing on war prohibition, or he might have repeated the story as Tommy Mason gave it to him.

He might have told them Mason's group of workers, each of whom received a reward from Schwab, not only broke a world's record in turning out the Tuckahoe, but how it has attained a reputation in the Camden shipyards as the gang that can do the fastest work, has fewer absences from all causes, and 50 per cent fewer accidents than any other group of workmen of the same size in the plant.

He might have told how Mason, when the order of the day in the nation's shipyards was "speed up," watched to see that no boozers got places on his gang. Mason has spent almost a lifetime in the shipyards and experience told him that booze and efficient work don't mix.

There were just two exceptions to Tommy Mason's ban on boozers. They were two riveters whom he permitted to remain in his gang for awhile, although he knew that they "took a drink or two" in the morning before they came to work.

But Mason also discovered that it was several hours each day before these two men reached their maximum speed, and occasionally they failed to report for duty.

The superintendent took a pencil and paper and did some calculating. He found out what the delay of these two men was costing the work of the gang. He deducted the number of rivets which "a drink or two" in the morning was costing.

He found that sober riveters had a larger average of rivets to their credit, at the end of the week, and the two boozers left. The Tuckahoe's record satisfied him that he is on the right course.

Tommy Mason isn't the only shipbuilder who has arrived at the same conclusion. Heads of plants in Camden have asked the excise commissioners to close the city's saloons in the morning until after the workmen have reported for duty.

Opinions of Hurley and Bainbridge Colby to the contrary, these practical business men say that rum lessens the efficiency of shipyard workers 20 per cent. And a 20 per cent delay in ship construction these days may mean disaster. Excise commissioners in Camden complied with the request, and saloons were closed in the mornings. But now the men go to work on various shifts at all hours of the day, and the saloons open inviting doors. Besides, superintendents can not be as particular in their choice of men today as was Tommy Mason when he picked the gang that broke the record on the Tuckahoe. Laborers are not so plentiful. Sometimes it is necessary to take a man who is known to be a boozier or try to run the plant shorthanded.

With labor conditions, and the absence of restraining laws thus helping them, saloonkeepers in the neighborhood of Camden's shipyards are doing a rushing business. Workers line up outside to wait their turn at the bar. According to events in Washington last week, Tommy Mason's secret of the Tuckahoe's record has not reached Chairman Hurley and some other members of the shipping board. It should also be stated here that Tommy Mason is no "prohibition fan-

atic," as some of the booze allies call them. When a clergyman, who is pastor of a church attended by a member of the shipbuilding firm, heard of Mason's refusal to hire boozers, he went to Mason to congratulate him.

"Now don't get me wrong," replied Mason. "We may both be against booze, but for different reasons. My objections are based on the fact that it lessens the efficiency of men. I'm against booze because it interferes with the building of ships—and we need ships."

War Prohibition

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producers of California, for instance, or the appetites of beer drinkers.

But this is a world-wide question; it is as old as the human race; it is as large as the earth. No one can successfully contend that alcohol is necessary for man. God never made a normal human being to whom alcohol was a necessity; if men by the cultivation of an unnecessary habit have brought themselves to believe that alcohol is necessary for them, they can not hope to bring this country and the world to conform to a perverted nature. The thing for them to do is to correct the habit and change their opinion—and prohibition has corrected habits and has changed opinions.

This gentleman, representing the brewery workers, speaks as if you can not do these things by law. If he will go into the states where they have tried prohibition, he will find that they have converted communities as well as individuals. Individuals who thought they could not get along without liquor have found, when they could not get it, that they were better off without it, they are glad it has been taken away from them. They have rejoiced that they have been redeemed, so to speak, that they have been saved from the slavery of drink.

And communities like Seattle, Washington, that voted against prohibition when it came in, have been prompt to vote for even more stringent laws after they have had an opportunity to see what the effect is.

Take Denver, Colorado, which voted against prohibition in 1914, when the state went dry; after they had had prohibition there for a little less than a year, the liquor interests tried to bring beer back, but the people of Denver rejected the beer amendment and by 14,000 majority voted against allowing beer to come back into the state of Colorado. Experience has shown that beer is not a necessity. Where they can have prohibition enforced, prohibition vindicates itself. If we can have prohibition enforced in the dry states, with other states around them from which the liquor can be brought in, by bootleggers, the benefit of prohibition will be much greater when we have it enforced as a national policy and when there are no states, still wet, to furnish a place from which the outlaws can act.

Senator Thompson. I wish to call your attention to an important point in that connection. In 1914, you will remember, we had a man in the state of Kansas who ran for governor, standing on a plank for the re-submission of the liquor question. And in my state, after 35 years of experience, that man received less than nine per cent of the votes of the state on that question.

Mr. Bryan. Yes. The facts on this subject are not to be found in the paid advertisements of the liquor interests. They are to be found in the expressions of the people themselves; and the result in Kansas is a case in point. After they had tried prohibition, and one man ran on a re-submission platform, he received less than nine per cent of the vote of the state.

Let me add this on the labor proposition: This gentleman does not represent all of the laborers. Let us remember that we are confronting a situation here that is not an ordinary one. We are asking the young man to leave his home and give his life, if necessary; and we have said that it is so necessary that that man shall be a 100 per cent man that we will not permit anyone to sell him intoxicating liquor. And yet, while that is the law, and while that law is backed by an overwhelming sentiment in the country, our law officers are kept busy punishing the representatives of the liquor traffic who are willing to make money by violating that law. This gentleman, representing the brewery interest, ought to know that the only American soldier who has died in disgrace abroad was a man who, under the influence of liquor, committed a crime and

was hung. His execution was approved by the authorities in Washington; the government said, "We can not afford to let a crime like that receive less punishment than death;" and yet that boy, who went out to die a hero, a patriot, died in disgrace on the gallows, while the people who furnished him the liquor are allowed to continue in business. It is time to go higher up; instead of punishing only the victims of liquor, we punish those who furnish them liquor, those who make a profession of producing crime, and then oppose prohibition with the money that they make from selling the liquor.

Let me appeal to the laborer: If the soldier boy is to give his life for his country, and in addition, is to be denied the beer which the brewers say is a necessity, why can not the laborer, whose life is not as hard as that of a soldier—why can he not make the sacrifice if that sacrifice is necessary—as the testimony shows that it is. The laborers have the comforts of home and better wages than the soldiers receive and they avoid the dangers of the battlefield—it is a reflection on their patriotism to say that they will demand beer at the expense of the food supply of the nation.

The gentleman spoke of hurting the mining industry in West Virginia. That is not true; and the best evidence that it is not true is to be found in the expressions of the mine owners themselves. The representatives of the mine operators of the Pittsburgh district met a few months ago, and declared that, if dry zones were made around their mines, they could produce 2,000 tons of coal more per day than they were producing; take liquor away from those who were mining coal and they could increase the production 600,000 tons in one year.

And remember, Mr. Chairman, that what the liquor business asks is this: That it shall be permitted to take the food that the people need, and the coal that the people need, and use the coal to convert the food into liquor that reduces the capacity of the men to mine coal and to produce food. They ask that they be permitted to burn the candle at both ends; that they be permitted to make the people do without bread in order that they may make liquor out of the bread-stuff; that they be allowed to close the schools in order that they may have coal for the breweries; and then they use the product that they make to lessen the quantity of bread produced and the quantity of coal produced.

Last winter the brewers kept running when there was not coal enough to supply the industries of this country. In the city of Bloomington, Illinois, I was told that the brewery there kept running while the schools were closed for lack of fuel. Shame on a city that will allow a brewery to run when there is not enough fuel for the schools.

The fact that the brewery insulted the intelligence and the patriotism of the people of that city probably had something to do with the fact that, a few weeks ago, Bloomington, by 2,100 majority, closed her twenty-five saloons, and added her name to the list of dry cities in Illinois.

Another matter. When these people tell you that they want the saloon to run, they must mean that they want it to run as it has been running, and as it will continue to run as long as it is permitted to curse the earth.

I was in Rochester, New York, recently, and a great audience, by a rising vote, sent a petition to Washington, asking that a dry zone be established around the aviation camp near that city. In the petition they stated that four saloons had been built at the gate of the aviation camp. If there is any time when a man needs a clear brain and a steady nerve, it is when he rises in an aeroplane.

Senator Overman a few weeks ago exhibited in the senate a brace taken from an aeroplane, and showed that it had been sawed in two, joined together with lead, and painted over, and then put back. The purpose was to so weaken the machine that when that machine went into the air and, in turning, and brought a strain on that brace, the brace would break, and an American boy go down to his death. That was the work of a German spy; and if they find that German spy, they will shoot him to death, and he ought to be shot to death.

But is the man who builds a saloon at the gate of an aviation camp, and tries to put weakness in the aviator where there ought to be strength, any less an enemy of our country than the German spy who tampers with the aeroplane? Surely the man is as important as the machine.

The people who defend this business must un-