

The Prohibition Issue

(From the Review of Reviews.)

Whenever, therefore, the country is ready to renounce the experiment, there is just one way to proceed, and that way is being pursued by the people in various parts of the country who are proposing to nominate Governor Edwards of New Jersey as a Democratic candidate for the presidency on a wet platform. These people know perfectly that prohibition has been adopted through a political victory of the dries, and that it can only be done away with through a political victory of the wets. The public should remember, however, that the American movement to outlaw the liquor business is of long standing, and the dry are likely to be better organized for the fight than the wets. A new equilibrium will soon have been established, and many of the forces formerly working for the liquor traffic will now support, passively at least, the changed situation to which they have become adjusted. So the wets will have to make their fight against new odds and with forlorn hopes.

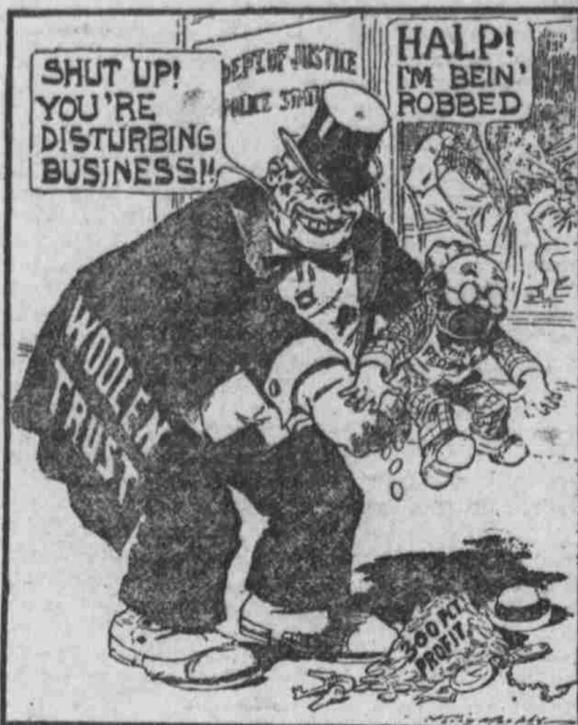
Many prominent politicians in both parties have been needlessly disturbed by the clamorous activity of the wets during the past few weeks. As a matter of fact, the metropolitan newspapers have so emphasized details pertaining to the transition period—the dismantling of the saloons, and the illicit traffic in surplus stock—as to convey a false impression to many minds. Democrats will do well to understand that the prohibition forces supporting William J. Bryan are very much stronger as a political factor than the liquor forces supporting Governor Edwards. The south is almost solid for prohibition, and the San Francisco Convention will not be stamped by New Jersey and Kentucky on the liquor question. As for the Republicans, it would seem reasonable to say that the great majority wish to give national prohibition a deliberate trial in perfect good faith. Neither party will do well to stake its fate this year upon challenging the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act.

It is to be remembered that many states have given the franchise to women. Moreover, the action of the West Virginia legislature in ratifying the suffrage amendment last month, after a hard fight under dramatic circumstances, made it probable that this nineteenth amendment would be adopted in time for this year's election of Congress and presidential electors. Thirty-three states had previously ratified, West Virginia making the thirty-fourth; and it was expected that at least two other states would act promptly, and thus secure the success of the amendment. That the votes of women could be very extensively marshalled in support and defense of national prohibition is hardly to be doubted. We will venture the guess that both great party conventions will declare in favor of giving prohibition a fair trial during the coming four years. As for the battle of percentages, it is evident that this must be fought out in the courts. The amendment refers to "intoxicating liquors" "for beverage purposes." It would seem to be the plain intent of the amendment that Congress rather than the separate states should define intoxicating liquors, inasmuch as the whole object of the amendment is to produce a condition of uniformity. It is for the federal courts, however, to decide in a test case what constitutes intoxicating liquor. A prompt decision of this question will highly desirable. In common understanding, the Eighteenth Amendment was adopted in general accord with the prohibition laws of many states which had fixed a very small percentage of alcohol in their definitions. Thus the Volstead Act was not regarded as out of line with recognized standards.

SOLID DEMOCRATIC STATE GOES AGAINST TREATY

A number of administration organs have been pretending that a federal payroll convention's refusal in Missouri to concede Senator Reed the delegate seat to which he was apparently elected constitutes a popular indorsement of Mr. Wilson and his peculiar policies. If these organs are at all interested in the truth of the matter, they would do well to turn their attention to the thick-and-thin Democratic state of Georgia. There, in the solid south, the Wilson program was a direct issue in last week's primaries, and

A DISTURBER



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the completed returns disclose not a crumb of comfort for the administrationists.

The three candidates in the Georgia Democratic primaries—and of course there are no real primaries in Georgia that are not Democratic were (1) Attorney General Palmer, who stood explicitly for President Wilson and his peace treaty without amendment; (2) Senator Hoke Smith, a member of President Cleveland's cabinet, who stood as frankly opposed to Wilson's foreign policies and in favor of ratification of the peace treaty "with American amendments," and (3) Thomas E. Watson, whose sole platform was opposition to Mr. Wilson, opposition to the League of Nations, and REJECTION of the entire peace treaty.

It turns out that the candidate who was most sweeping and unqualified in his denunciation of Wilsonism led the list. Watson polled 51,974 votes; Palmer, 48,460; Senator Smith 45,568. Adding the totals of the two anti-administration candidates, we find that there were cast for Wilson and his policies 48,460 votes (Palmer); against Wilson and his policies 97,542 votes (Watson and Smith.)—Pittsburgh Press.

PRAISES BRYAN'S "TREATIES"

A Washington special to the New York Times, under date of April 25, says: "Any dispute that can be talked about can be settled," declares James Brown Scott, Director of the Division of International Law of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in his introduction to a volume just published by the endowment containing text of all the "peace treaties" negotiated by William Jennings Bryan while he was Secretary of State.

The great merit of Mr. Bryan's plan, according to Mr. Scott, is that it provides a permanent commission to "investigate" any dispute which may arise between the parties to the treaty. While there might be objection on the part of some countries to "compulsory arbitration," there could be no objection to nations agreeing in advance to submit to "compulsory investigation" of every dispute. The advantage of the treaties is that they provide the machinery for delay of extreme measures and for actual clash of arms, he says, for "it is difficult for a nation to say investigate when it is angry." At such a time, therefore, the commission should be authorized to tender its services and thus relieve both parties of embarrassment.

FROM AN OLD SOLDIER

Burkett, Nebraska, April 24, 1920.—Editor World Herald, Omaha, Nebraska. Dear Sir: For several days prior to last Tuesday's primary I felt very much discouraged and downcast, I fully expected to see my friend BILL BRYAN electrocuted at the polls. This morning I am feeling very happy indeed and am loving everybody because Bill still lives and is doing business at the old stand. I am sorry for Senator

Hitchcock because Bill did give him a good spanking from the platform, not because he hated him (Bill never hated anybody) but because he loved him and wanted him to be good. I want to suggest to the Senator that he take his hat off to Bill, acknowledge his leadership, go with him to San Francisco, pat him on the back and do every thing he asks him to do. Take my word for it, Senator, you will be on the road to fame and honor.—W. D. Roberts, (Member of Soldiers and Sailors Home).

BRYAN AND BOOZE

Mr. Bryan is pre-eminently one of those useful public speakers who express in plain, convincing language things which many people have felt were true, concerning developments in national affairs in the United States, but which have not been put clearly into words. While some citizens and officials are displaying most hazy notions about the future of the liquor traffic in the republic, this hardy campaigner comes forward with a sentence of two so simple and so telling as, apparently, to sweep away for good any fog that may have clouded the vision of anybody. Thus, the other evening in Washington, he said that when forty-five of the forty-eight states had ratified an amendment to the constitution, no party with any respect for itself or hope for the future could disregard the conscience of the American people. Quite in line with this statement was his added remark that there was no question about a wet plank in the Democratic platform; the only question was whether there would be a dry plank. It may be worth while for various people to note the opinion of so seasoned a political authority, expressed at the same time, that there would be a dry plank, because the Republican party would without doubt adopt one, and therefore its opponent could not afford to do otherwise.—Christian Science Monitor.

THE WET PROGRAM

This is from an interview with Norman E. Mack, the New York member of the Democratic national committee:

"Do you think with Mr. Bryan that there will be a dry plank in both party platforms?" Mr. Mack was asked. "It may be all right for the Republican party," he replied, "but it would be suicidal for the Democrats. I believe that putting prohibition in the Federal Constitution was a mistake. I am against the saloon, but I believe any man should have the opportunity of having light wines or beers, or even spirituous liquors, in his home, if he wishes, for medicinal or other purposes. I believe there should be a wet plank in the Democratic platform." Asked just what sort of a plank he meant, Mr. Mack said one that would carry out the ideas he had expressed, and also a plank calling for a referendum on the repeal of the "eighteenth amendment."

ALIVE AND KICKING

Every once in a while those who camp on his track
Tell us "William J. Bryan can never come back;
He is buried so deep
That he never will peep,
And the party will suffer no more of his slack."
With his service these men of his party pick flaws,
And declare him a block to the partisan cause;
"But today he is dead,"
Which no sooner is said
Than he bobs up as lively as ever he was.
That he scourges the party I haven't a doubt,
And he often has put the old-timers to rout;
Then they turn and show fight,
And they "kill him off" right,
But what good to be dead if you don't find it out?
They have buried Bill Bryan in regular style
For the last twenty years, every once in a while;
But his grave, be it said,
Always gives up its dead,
And today may be seen his benevolent smile.
Soon the fight will be on and the campaign will siz,
As the fighters arise who have always ariz.
Whose great voice will be heard,
May it now be inferred?
Is Bill Bryan immortal? I'll say that he is.
—A. L. Bixby, in Nebraska State Journal.