

The Commoner

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No Issue Joined

While both the leading candidates declare the League of Nations to be the paramount issue, neither of them has so far stated it as to enable the people to vote upon it intelligently. Senator Harding is not free to outline a plan for an "association of nations" because the "irreconcilables" are as much opposed to any "association" as they are to a "league." In like manner, Governor Cox is not free to say what reservations he would consider reasonable because the president does not admit the need of any reservations at all.

But, even if each candidate clearly set forth in detail his idea of a league or association, it would not be worth while to consider the merits of the two plans because neither could be carried out. It requires two-thirds of the Senate to ratify, and as neither party can hope to secure within ten votes of two-thirds, a compromise is necessary. If Governor Cox and Senator Harding will get together and agree upon a compromise, and then pledge the senators to carry it out, progress will be possible. A referendum is impossible under the present conditions.

We had a "solemn referendum" in 1918, but a Democratic president did not heed it any more than President Taft heeded the re-election of a Democratic congress in 1910.

No wonder the people are apathetic: how can they enthuse without something definite to shout for? On the league question the voters will work by faith rather than by sight—each will vote with the party in which he has the most confidence and trust it to work out the problem as best it can. W. J. BRYAN.

"DEAD AS SLAVERY"

One of the presidential candidates is quoted as saying that "the liquor question is as dead as slavery." That is true, but both conventions were afraid of the corpse. In the Democratic convention nearly one-third of the delegates voted to resurrect John Barleycorn. As no vote was taken in the Republican convention we do not know how large a percentage favored reopening the question. There is a simple way of testing a candidate's opinion as to whether life is actually extinct. Of course, the candidates would, if elected, veto any attempt to reopen the slavery question; IF THE LIQUOR QUESTION IS JUST AS DEAD, why should either candidate hesitate to promise to veto any attempt to reopen the liquor question? W. J. BRYAN.

ARTICLE 10

Why should Article 10 be allowed to delay the peace of the world? If congress can not be robbed of its constitutional right to declare war, a moral obligation would be of no value. Then why should it prevent ratification?

And, if a moral obligation is not binding, why insist upon it? If congress is to retain

Vote for Dry Candidates

On another page of this issue will be found the names of upwards of two-hundred candidates for the United States Senate and House of representatives who have publicly pledged themselves if elected to use their influence and vote in congress to prevent raising the alcoholic content of permitted beverages or otherwise weakening the enforcement provisions of the Volstead act.

The Commoner sent letters to all candidates for congress of all political parties, and enclosed a copy of the following pledge:

Question—Will you, if elected to congress, use your vote and your influence for the effective enforcement of the present prohibition law, honestly and in good faith, without any increase in the alcoholic content of permitted beverages and without any weakening of any other of its provisions?

Not all the candidates for congress who are in favor of upholding the Volstead act have yet signed The Commoner's pledge, but all candidates whose names are listed in this issue have publicly taken their stand and may be depended upon by the people to vote in congress to protect the home against the attacks that the liquor interests and the vice element have undertaken.

Some candidates for congress have been trying to make themselves believe, and to make the public believe, that the liquor question is settled and that it is "as dead as slavery." The liquor interests of the country do not believe that the liquor question is dead. They are attempting to elect a wet congress, and they are pledging candidates for congress wherever possible to favor the modification of the Volstead act by raising the alcoholic content of permitted beverages, and to change the law so as to permit each state to determine for itself what the alcoholic content shall be and to what extent prohibition would be enforced within its boundaries.

On another page will be found a copy of a membership blank that is being sent out in an effort to secure members and contributions for an association that will devote its energies to nullifying the Volstead act. As the people are becoming aroused in the various congressional districts over the efforts of the liquor interests to override the state and national prohibition enforcement laws, they are questioning their candidates as to their position on the Volstead act. As a result of this questioning, The Commoner is continuing to receive pledges from candidates asking that their names be published on The Commoner's roll of honor as a notice to the liquor interests that they have taken their stand in favor of the home against the saloon. The dry forces of the country are urged to continue their efforts to get pledges from their candidates for congress, and they are urged to vote on election day for those candidates who have the moral and political courage to take their stand on the side of the home.

the right to decide the question when it arises, what harm could a reservation do? Why object to it Both sides have exaggerated the importance of Article 10—both sides have been foolishly obstinate. Together they have disgraced our nation. "A plague on both their houses." W. J. BRYAN.

HAS PAID THE PENALTY

If the British government desires to extend clemency to Mayor MacSwiney it can find an excuse in the fact that, having imposed upon himself a penalty more severe than any government would inflict, he has satisfied the demands of the law. A pardon under these conditions would not establish a very dangerous precedent.

ROLL AWAY THE STONE?

The League of Nations was buried on March 19, when the Senate refused to accept the president's plan and the president refused to accept the Senate's plan. Who will roll away the stone?

One of the wets thinks it was "silly" for a candidate to declare the liquor question as dead as slavery, but a good many silly things happen during a campaign.

Dodging on Prohibition

Governor Cox and Senator Harding continue to dodge the prohibition issue. Both declare very positively in favor of ENFORCEMENT, but their promises add nothing to the oath of office which the president must take when he enters upon his duties. What candidate would deny, before the election, that he intended to keep his oath? But what constitutes enforcement? A wet may have a very different idea of enforcement from that entertained by a dry. A wet might—probably would—favor a smaller appropriation for enforcement than a dry would think it necessary, and a WET MIGHT APPOINT WETS TO ENFORCE THE LAW.

But enforcement is not the only issue, or even the chief issue connected with prohibition. The wets are trying to secure a wet congress, and a wet congress would be sure to repeal the Volstead act or weaken it by increasing the alcoholic content. Would the candidates sign or veto such a bill? THAT QUESTION REMAINS UNANSWERED. Both candidates evade it—that is, neither answers the question ek