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### PROHIBITION IN MINNESOTA

Judge Page Morris was on the bench in the United States District Court in Minneapolis. The Dearborn Independent gives a thrilling account of how this man has thrown the fear of the law into the hearts of criminals. It says:

"A hundred bootleggers awaiting sentence sat in the crowded courtroom, or, unable to get in, stood about with interested friends in anxious little groups in the corridors.

"Sixty days in the Hennepin County Jail, and \$200 fine," said the judge at intervals, and the line kept moving up. Or, maybe, it was ninety days.

"Presently the marshal held up his hand.

"Your honor, the jail is filled," he said.

"How about the Ramsey County Jail?" asked the judge.

"Lots of room there, your honor," replied the marshal.

"All right, we will fill it," said the judge and he promptly began to carry out his promise. He had sentenced some thirty men to the Ramsey County Jail, when the marshal held up his hand again.

"The Ramsey County Jail is filled, your honor," said the marshal.

"All right, we will proceed to fill the Wright County Jail," said his honor. "By the way, is that a good jail?"

"Reassured, the judge filled the Wright County Jail, and then looked about for more worlds to conquer. He discovered the McLeod County Jail, and likewise filled it with bootleggers. The he decided he had done enough for one day.

"The next day he started in again. He filled the jail at Winona. In a few days more, he had filled the Wabasha and Scott County Jails and started out to fill the Sibley County Jail. In one session of the Federal Court in Minneapolis and one session in St. Paul, he filled a dozen jails with violators of the prohibition laws.

"Some of the jails he filled several times. When there was a 'vacancy' in one of them, he had a bootlegger to fill it.

"I have made up my mind that persons who sell liquor are going to jail," said the judge. "No getting away with fines. They are going to jail every time I can send them there. I am going to stop this liquor selling if I have to fill all the jails in Minnesota."

"This unusual method of dealing with persons who violate the prohibition law naturally caused a great consternation. Liquor sellers who had not been bothered much by fines were alarmed at the prospect of going to jail. Attorneys were hired and instructed to use their best efforts to induce the judge to listen to reason, but they argued in vain.

"Judge Morris continued sending offenders to jail for thirty and sixty and ninety days. In some cases, the jail sentences were as long as five months, and one old offender got nine months. In many cases, he sentenced the men to jail and fined them, too.

"One man, who had been fined twice before in prohibition cases, came up before Judge Morris for sentence on his third offense. He was fined \$400 and sent to Leavenworth prison for a year and a day.

"I am going to stop this thing if I have to send every man of you to Leavenworth for a year," the judge said.

"Several men who were convicted under a charge of conspiracy to violate the prohibition laws were fined \$5,000 and given eighteen months at Leavenworth, 'so they would have enough time to reflect a little about the seriousness of violating the prohibition law.'

"Now, all this may sound a bit unusual when one is accustomed to seeing bootleggers get off with a small fine, say \$100 or so, and continue

their illicit trade at big profits. Judge Morris has unusual ideas about the enforcement of prohibition.

"Why does he send men to jail for violating the prohibition laws?"

"Jail sentences are the only thing that will stop this illicit trade in liquor," he said. "I began by imposing fines, but this failed.

"Men were making big profits out of the liquor traffic and a fine meant little or nothing to them. But the humiliation of being sent to jail is the big thing. Even a short term is a greater deterrent than a big fine.

"I am convinced that jail sentences will stop the liquor traffic. If we don't get the desired effect, the penalties ought to be increased. That will put teeth in the law.

"Jail sentences may not stamp out violations of the prohibition laws right away, but they will tend to minimize them. The big return from strict enforcement after all will not be the immediate return. The big result will come in the next generation and in succeeding generations."

"A year ago, Judge Morris warned bootleggers that he was going to give them stiff jail sentences in the future whenever he could. Not many took him seriously then. Even after he had sent a large number to jail at the June term of court in St. Paul, they were not convinced.

"When court opened in Minneapolis in October, there were 320 liquor cases on the calendar. About half of the men accused pleaded guilty; the others prepared to fight. After a number of trials all resulting in convictions, Judge Morris said something about men who tried to delay the course of justice when they knew they were guilty. Then he gave them jail sentences of from three to five months.

"That caused a stampede among the bootleggers to change their pleas from 'not guilty' to 'guilty.' Maybe they would get off easier that way, the wise ones reasoned. From then on the defense was demoralized. How could a bootlegger decide how to plead with a judge like that?"

"When the St. Paul session began about half of the men accused told the judge they were not guilty. Then, lawyers and clients began holding anxious conferences. When the time came for trial, virtually all the defendants walked meekly in and changed their pleas to guilty. In one week 110 cases were disposed of, and not a man had the temerity to demand a trial. Of course, the chances didn't look overly bright for acquittals. Out of 320 cases at the Minneapolis session, there had not been one acquittal."

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