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"Sane Government and Sound Business"

Address delivered by Congressman Jacob E. Meeker, at Boyd Theater, Omaha, Neb., Friday Evening, October 27th, 1916

Mr. Chairman and Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am glad that the chairman called your attention to the fact that I had an accident, but that it has not injured by backbone.

That little debate that we are to have next Tuesday night is a rather peculiarly rigged-up affair, inasmuch as the negative has to speak first, but that is all right.

They asked me this afternoon if I would be satisfied with that arrangement, and I said, arrange it any way you please, just so we get at it; that is all I want. The truth is the truth whether you tell it last or first.

Now in my address tonight, which will probably run until well toward morning (laughter), as it sometimes does, I am going to say what I have said from every platform, as I have gone about the country.

I am asked to talk with you people tonight; to confer with you. I am here to discuss one of the most important and probably the most important issue that your state has confronted since it was a state.

I want the ladies and gentlemen of this audience to feel perfectly free, at any time, to come in with any question which you wish to ask, if you are looking for information.

If I can answer your question I will do it, and be glad to give you the authority for it. If I cannot answer it, I will tell you so.

I don't pretend to know everything. And I have little use for a man who does. (Laughter.)

But you are not to make a speech, under the pretense of asking a question. I will make the speech.

And if there is somebody who wants to say something really funny and cute, and make a monkey of the speaker, you can wade in, but you will have to take what you get.

I am going to call a spade a spade. I am not going to mince words at all.

When I refer to the business in Peruna and Hostetter's Bitters and those that consume those preparations, I am going to tell you that the Hostetter Bitters and Peruna user is just as much of an alcoholic as an Old Crow drinker; and they get more alcohol with every dollar's worth.

Now I am going to say what I have said in a great many places throughout the country.

There is a Bible; perfectly good Bible. There is every reference in the Bible to wine, and strong drink, and drunkenness. And there is a perfectly good ten-dollar bill.

Now any time while I am speaking or after I am through, or when I am here on Sunday again, at the Fontenelle hotel or when I am back here on Tuesday night, the man or woman who will come and get that Bible, and these references, and show me where, when you take the full passage; not just a line, but a full passage of Scripture anywhere, and show me that the Bible is for prohibition, you keep the ten and just return the Bible. (Laughter.)

Now, gentlemen, don't all rush down at once. (Laughter.)

The Bible is against intemperance. The Bible is against gluttony.

If a man drinks himself to death; if he is a rich man, there is nothing said about it. If he is a poor man, the newspapers all have it, and the preachers all talk about it. (Laughter.)

After his death we say, whereas, an all-wise providence has seen fit to remove from our midst our beloved brother, therefore, be it resolved. (Laughter.) That is a courtesy which we show to the glutton. (Laughter.)

The Bible is against lying, too; although some of the drys have not yet discovered it. (Laughter.)

It is opposed to and against bearing false witness against thy neighbor. It is against covetousness. It is against a lot of other things that we will not have time to catalogue.

And one of the things that Jesus of Nazareth never overlooked, practically, in any sermon he preached, was hypocrisy.

It is just as much a sin of society today as when He was here.

That is the man who pretends to be good; to be a reformer; to be righteous; but who actually lives the other way.

Our chairman referred to "wets" and "drys," using a popular expression; meaning that he was differentiating between those who are going to vote for license and regulation and those who are going to vote for no regulation.

To me, a wet or a dry, so far as liquor is concerned, the line is drawn to differentiate between the way folks live; not the way they talk. (Applause.)

I think one of the best things that Emerson ever said was, "You are talking so loud I cannot hear what you say." (Laughter.)

And what a glorious time it would be in Omaha tomorrow morning, and how it would shock and shrive the world with amazement, if it were announced, bona fide, that every fellow who was talking or working for this amendment, had gone on the water wagon. (Laughter.)

You say that you are trying to have Nebraska on the water wagon. Well, then, why don't you get a water-wagon ballot?

What is the use of changing your system from retail to wholesale, in order to get on the water wagon? (Laughter.)

When you are now buying it by the nickel and dime's worth, why do you exchange where you buy it by the 16-worth, when you are headed for the water wagon? (Laughter.)

And the funniest water-wagon man to me, when you size him up, is the fellow who goes around denouncing the men who buy their liquors in the saloon, and he puts in a constitutional amendment that he can have his in church. (Laughter.)

Now I am going to call a spade a spade. (Laughter.)

A Voice: Go to it.

The Speaker: Some fellow says, go to it.

What do you think of a proposition where its advocates have gone over this country for years, saying that the thing they are talking about it what kills people, and then put in a constitutional provision that they can get it for medicine. (Laughter.) Do you want to kill all these folks?

Medicine is for the purpose of making sick people well, and weak people strong. But you have talked this stuff for years and said it is going to kill them. But when you get ready to vote dry, as you call it, you say: Well, I have got to have my medicine. (Laugher.) You hypocritical old scoundrel. (Laughter.)

What is the matter with you? Can't you think in a straight line for a few minutes? What do you say in your amendment? What has become of everything you said in denouncing liquor by what you wrote into that amendment yourself?

I see a lot of ladies here tonight. I am glad you are here. I want you to stay in good humor. Some of you haven't smiled yet, but you will before we are through. (Laughter.) You will warm up after a while.

This is the first time you have ever heard anything said on this side of the question. You are novices yet.

Why is it that you good ladies are making the manufacturers of some sixty-two or sixty-three varieties of medicine that contain from 12 per cent to 48 per cent of alcohol; why is it that you are making these men millionaires, while you complain of the man who sells your husband 5½ per cent alcohol?

Why are you denouncing men who are going about this country talking in favor of beers and light wins, while you have in your medicine chest a booze drug which runs five times as much alcohol as your husband uses at the bar. (Laughter.)

I picked up a prohibition paper on the train yesterday; so-called prohibition paper. It had three advertisements advising women to use the concoctions that were advertised, and any one of three would run from three to six times the alcohol that any man can get in a glass of beer.

Now I will tell you what is the matter with you good ladies. In the first place, you never thought of that before. Many of you didn't know it.

But you have heard of Lydia Pinkham's. (Laughter.) Well, Lydia seems to be known here. (Laughter.) You have heard of Lydia Pinkham's Compound and Warner's Safe Cure, and Wine of Cardui, and Hostetter's, and all of these things. You have heard them always called medicine. You have not heard beer or wine referred to in the last fifteen or twenty years as anything but booze, booze, booze, booze. (Laughter.) And it has simply scared you all to death. That is all. (Laughter.)

Now if there is anything on earth that ought to be called booze—because there is no other name for it—it is Lydia Pinkham's and Hostetter's and that stuff. Nobody knows what is in it. The government compels them to tell how much alcohol there is in it, but aside from that it is a secret.

Do you get sick, my good lady, frequently, because you like Hostetter's? (Laughter.) Or do you take it because you are sick? Which is it? And how does it affect you? Do you feel better after a glass of Lydia Pinkham's. (Laughter.)

If you would take the alcohol out of these things, they could not force that stuff down your throat with a crowbar. (Laughter.)

I don't want to put race against race here or nation against nation, let alone brother against brother; but we will just take one more turn out of this question, and then take up another one.

I presume it is because they have been using beer for the last two or three hundred years that the German ladies are always such nervous, shriveled-up shrimps. (Laughter.) And as a rule they make such poor wives. (Laughter.) And are also frequently in the divorce court—I guess not. (Laughter.)

Some time I am going to go and make an investigation of all the divorce cases where the women use tea and coffee and where they use beer and wine, and it will make somebody think.

Did you ever hear of a woman being told to quit using beer because it made her nervous? I never did. (Applause.)

Did you ever hear of a lady being advised to cut out tea and coffee because it made her nervous? I have.

You good mothers who are here tonight, when the physician came to you, and you and the little baby were not doing very well, which did he recommend? Tea or coffee, or Hostetter's, or malt nutrine?

Think it over. I am just trying to get you to use horse sense, that is all.

That is enough on this question.

Now I want to give you ladies something else to take home, talk over and think about.

(Disturbance in rear part of the theater.)

Voices: Keep quiet; keep quiet; put him out; keep quiet or get out.

The Speaker: Let him alone; he will go fast enough when it gets a little hotter. (Laughter.) You will see him get a move after a while. I will tell you, my friends, here is one thing about it: I have attended a great many of these meetings on both sides of this question, and heard some of the great speakers on both sides of the question, and some way or other it is harder for the fellow on the other side to take hot shot from us than it is for us fellows to take it from them.

The difference is, if we disturb a meeting we are drunk. (Laughter.) And if they disturb a meeting, it is for the glory of God. (Laughter.)

(Disturbance continues.)

The Speaker: Let him alone. He's all right.

Look here now. I am not talking about the women of Omaha. I want you to understand that from the start. I have got too much good sense to discuss ladies in the town where I am talking. (Laughter.)

I know the best way to interest a woman is to talk to her about her neighbors. So I am discussing the women of Council Bluffs (Laughter), that great and prosperous city of which Omaha is about to become a competitor. (Laughter.) Where real estate is lower and lower, and keeps getting lower every day.

You good ladies who are here tonight, like many of your sex, who have permitted yourselves in these last few years to be worked up into a sort of hysterics, who have been hypnotized by lurid statements that have been made to you from the platform and that have come to you through the press, have come to believe that the greatest enemy of your sons is the saloon; you believe it, and you spend your days and your nights in fear and in prayer trying to do something to eliminate that institution.

Now I want you to keep in good humor for ten minutes and I am going to talk to you right straight from the shoulder as you have never been talked to before. We can all have our good time here, but we might as well begin to look the truth in the face. We have been flim-flamming our her life is wrecked?

You good ladies are asked, as it was stated in the letter that was referred to by our chairman, do you want your son to grow up a drunkard, or your daughter to marry a drunkard, or go into a place where her life is wreiked?

The thing that I am about to tell you came to me a few years ago out of an audience just about like this. I was making an address, and I referred to crime against women, but I did not have the facts. And after it was over, a gentleman at the hotel said to me: Mr. Meeker, do you know what the percentages of criminal women are, as related to their occupation? I said I did not. I had never thought of it in that way before.

I began an investigation and when I discovered what I am going to tell you, I was just as much shocked as you are going to be in the next four minutes.

You have shed many tears over the girl that goes on the stage to play. You have shed many tears over the girl that is forced into the factory or the department store; or out into the world to associate with us men. (Laughter.)

Where are the criminal women?

I am not asking you, where is your wandering boy tonight. I am talking about the daughter.

In the year in which this census was taken it was gathered from every criminal court in America, of record, of all the women who came to that bar for trial and received sentence. And these women came from the following places:

Musicians and music teachers furnished two-tenths of 1 per cent.

The school teachers one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The stenographers and the typewriters one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The bookkeepers and the copyists three-tenths of 1 per cent.

The hotel and boarding house keepers one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The laundresses, 4 8-10 per cent.

The nurses and midwives, six-tenths of 1 per cent.

The artificial flower and paper box workers, one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The cigar worker and the tobacco girls, two-tenths of 1 per cent.

The mill and factory girls, 4 7-10 per cent.

The milliners, two-tenths of 1 per cent.

The telegraph and telephone girls, two-tenths of 1 per cent.

All other occupations, 9 per cent.

And servant girls, 76.6 per cent.

And you thought it was the saloon.

To put it in other words, out of every 100 women who went before the courts in this country to accept sentence for some crime committed, 76.6 per cent of them got breakfast in some woman's kitchen before they went to jail.

Think it over. Think it over. And ask yourselves, if you were a kitchen girl, and treated like the kitchen girls that you know about, would you go to hell or not.

Now let us just think for a moment. Let us be rational.

I am not going to say where is your wandering boy tonight.

Where is your hired girl right now.

You don't know and you don't care, unless you want to get her to march in the dry parade.

Now think a minute. The girls that have been mentioned in these trades or professions can dress when their work is done, go out on the street, turn in at the front gate, go up to the front door and go in at the front door; sit in the parlor, play on the piano, dine with the family and, if she is pretty enough, marry one of the boys; except the 76, and when they come down the street and turn into the front walk and go as far as the front steps, the boss in the house says, you come in through the kitchen door with the ice man and the coal man, and you go up the back stairs to the poorest room in the house, and you will keep your place.

That explains it.

Those girls are human.

How do they find their gentlemen companions? Through the motherly interest of the woman that employs them?

Did you ever hear of a servant girls' shirt social?

Did you ever hear of a Young Women's Christian association reception to kitchen mechanics?

That girl loves companionship just as well as you, and she loves men just as well as you do.

If she chances to find some man on the street she may strike it all right, but she is taking every chance in the world.

When he comes to call upon her she can entertain him in the kitchen and if he don't want to sit on the table he can sit in the sink. (Laugher.)

But he must not come into a room with a carpet on it and books and pianos and bright light and home things.

He is only the guy that comes to see the kitchen mechanic.

Where is the lady that is running the house? She has gone to the reform meeting. (Laughter.)

They are going to have an election to see who will be secretary of the Blue Seven society, and she must be there.

If that girl and that young fellow don't enjoy the odor of the kitchen and its charming surroundings, they can go out the back door and around the back way and walk up and down the sidewalk, and if they don't like that they can go to the dance hall. They have got those three places.

That is the way you protect your hired girl.

I am not talking to the ladies of Omaha. (Laughter.)

That girl is the first one up in the morning. She must get breakfast for dad and keep on getting breakfast until finally they are all down.

She is the last one to finish work at night. She has one Thursday afternoon a week (pronounced awfternoon), in which she can make her social calls. But she must not come into the front part of my house and read my books, or look at my pictures. I might have Mrs. Diamond Dust this awfternoon. And although Mrs. Diamond Dust was a counter jumper just before she was married she is up in sassiety now and we cawnt have Mary in there reading. (Laughter.)

And you don't know and don't care where that girl goes, or what she does, just so she is there in time to get breakfast, and don't steal the silverware. (Laughter.)

Now, my good lady friends, I want to say something to you, in all seriousness.

You good women, yes, you admit the truth of what I have just said, but you didn't know it.

Did you ever see a woman working her fingernails off to train her daughter to go into some other woman's kitchen? (Laughter.) I never did.

I know of plenty of mothers who are going without the clothes that they should have to put their daughters through school, to study bookkeeping or stenography, to put her in some man's office at $4 a week, when as a girl in a kitchen she could get $5 and room and board.

And why is that?

Because you don't want your daughter treated as you treat the other woman's daughter. (Applause.)

And until you reduce that percentage, until you bring that percentage down to at least a par with the factory girls, don't go around any more looking for the wandering boy. (Laughter and applause.)

Just through the kitchen door; just exactly 3½ inches, between the dining room and the kitchen, is the social line drawn between women.

They send 76 per cent of them into jail and into prison, and you think you would save her by marching in a dry parade. (Laughter.)

Now, any time it gets too hot you are at perfect liberty to go. (Laughter.) I know this talk makes you fidgetty. (Laughter.)

I am not concerned in what you think of me. I am concerned in telling you the plain, blunt truth, and see if I can't get you to recover from this fit you have been having.

You go home tonight—

However, I am not talking to the women of Omaha, but Council Bluffs.

Let the American housewife go home tonight and apologize to her hired girl because she has treated her like a dog, and open to her the hand of womanly comradeship and companionship, and the heart of that poor girl will burst with joy that she has found a friend of her sex, under the roof where she is.

SOUND GOVERNMENT AND SOUND BUSINESS.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been making in your state and in the state of Michigan a study of the popular mind, so far as government is concerned.

A few years ago there came a great crying demand that we should have government by the people.

Certain individuals, who are well known in this state, were leaders in that movement.

What was called the initiative and referendum began to be written into the laws of the different states.

The people said to themselves that the legislators were either too lazy or too ignorant, or too crooked, to pass laws that were right; so they said, we will take it and do it ourselves.

They got the initiative and referendum. As I have gone about this state and in Michigan I have carried with me this proposed amendment and the amendment which they had in Michigan, and I have asked that those present who have read it would hold up their hands.

I have not found an audience yet where 5 per cent had read it.

How many have read it here?

And yet you say you know something about government.

I want to say to you that, to my mind, one of the serious things in this so-called popular government is the indifference of people to their government. (Applause.)

Why, you are tonight, some of you, saying you would like to take hold of that speaker and choke him, because he is talking against your family, and you don't know yourself what you are excited about.

Think of it. Less than 5 per cent of the men and women of this state have read that amendment; and still they, some of them, have gone into a hysterical fit in favor of it.

Now I am for anything that is genuine. I believe in honest money as against counterfeit. I believe in honest men as against counterfeits. And I believe in honest prohibition instead of counterfeit.

If you are going to have prohibition, have prohibition.

How does an honest prohibitionist expect to advance his cause by voting for a fraud?

That is the thing that sticks me and absolutely makes me wonder when I find that the preachers are for this thing. (Applause.)

And that is just exactly why I sent the invitation to Dr. Lowe to come on the platform and tell it to the people.

There is no reason why thinking men, who are equally interested in the moral welfare of the community and the state, should be divided on that thing.

If you want real prohibition, why did you adopt a fraud?

And if you don't want prohibition, why don't you keep regulation? Why do you try to excuse yourselves by hiding behind a word and talking about the semblance rather than the substance?

You are getting ready to pass a law which, when it goes into the courts of Nebraska, if it becomes a part of the organic law of this state, will absolutely tie the hands of every honest prohibitionist, who ever would hope to see daylight in Nebraska. (Applause.)

Why should not a man be honest enough, as a friend to his own cause, to down a fraud when he sees it?

But instead of that a lot of these gentlemen—and I am not unwilling to suggest that that language was written that way for a purpose. I think any man who has got sense enough to read English would know that that language would not prohibit anybody from getting liquor.

But here you are, swept away with a hysteria about a word; two words; one is prohibition and the other is dry.

I do not differentiate between the men who think in straight lines and those who never think. You make your differentiation as to whether the fellow stood for that language or not, and you have not read it.

I defy any man in this audience or in this state of Nebraska to read that proposed constitutional amendment as published and say that he believes, as God is his judge, that there will be one pint less of liquor used in Nebraska when that becomes a law than there is now.

I demand that he shall state why he believes it.

This thing of simply cavorting around somewhere, in a sequestered spot and throwing brickbats and mud at men who do not agree with you, when you have no reason to back it up, is a thing of the past with me. It don't matter if the man has a REV. in front of his name or two D's back of it. It does not make any difference when it comes to a question of the sound sense of the proposed law.

This is not a matter of waving the American eagle in your faces and working up a cry over something that you never saw in your life. That is past.

Never you let any other man, be you man or woman; never let him put it across on you again that the saloon is to blame for the the wreck of most of our girls.

You got it straight tonight. Now cut that out.

How does it come that W. C. T. U. folks never quote Frances Willard any more? She was their president for forty years. Organized, started the movement. But you never see Frances Willard in the literature; you never see her picture in the prohibition dry parade.

I will tell you why:

Because Francis Willard, at the end of that forty years, stood up before the world, and she said, I was mistaken. I am now an old woman, said she, but if I had my life to live over, I would not give it to fight liquor, for I have discovered that men are not poor because they drink, but THAT THEY DRINK BECAUSE THEY ARE POOR. (Applause.)

That declaration of Frances E. Willard at the close of her great career shut her out of the dry literature.

But she stands in the Hall of Fame at Washington, the only American woman who is there.

Why? Because she spent forty years in that work?

No. But because, at the end of it, she was big enough to stand up and admit she was wrong. (Applause.)

SOUND GOVERNMENT. What is it?

It is that system of government which leaves those who must live under it the happiest, the best contented, the least rebellious and the most prosperous.

That is all the function government has.

And it applies to the home, to the community, to the state and to the nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the peril of this country today is over-lawmaking.

Since 1910, the state legislatures of the United States have enacted sixty thousand new laws; the federal government has enacted over three thousand, and the state of Kansas, since it wrote prohibition in its constitution, has enacted 1,509 separate laws to enforce prohibition.

When Jesus of Nazareth came to this earth he found religio moral legalism broken down. It was a failure. He so declared it. And He was against it then and He is against it now.

And any man who undertakes to save society by the policeman's billy has left the method that Jesus adopted.

He said, change the man's heart and you have solved your reform.

The legal reformer says, beat it into him, if you have to kill him to do it. Put him in jail to make him good. Send him to the penitentiary to convert him into a saint.

That is your theory. I sait it applies at home. I am not talking about Omaha.

But did you ever go into a home anywhere, where everything that occurred was—now, did you do that; sit down; go up and wash your face; shut up; if I catch you doing that again I will break your back; don't stay out after 7 o'clock, I will be hunting you.

Every second of every child's life in that home was government.

What happened? One of two things: The boys in that home either grew up up be milksops or anarchists. One of the two.

The surest way to get a boy to learn to be an expert at cards is to tell him if you catch him at it you will break his back. (Laughter.) And the surest way to get a girl to marry the fellow you hate is to tell her if you ever catch her out with him, she can't come home again.

Why is it that in the prisons and the penitentiaries, when you take a religious census, you find that a large per cent of the inmates were Sunday school boys? And some of them are some that were raised in these blue law homes.

Isn't that a delightful home in which to visit? Don't you always love to go where somebody is swinging the big stick every minute? (Laughter.)

Everything is perfectly correct and in its place; not a thing out of order; and if any little urchin should chance to be found looking crosswise at a book he knows he would be skinned in a minute.

Oh, the painfulness of such a life! The unhappiness in such a home!

And you have gone into other homes where they did not seem to have any particular rules.

Children sat down and talked it over with the father; they sat up to the table and ate; they had fun while they were doing it; they would play pranks on one another; sometimes tear out the whole side of a shirt; the father and mother might laugh at that; and, oh, what a home it was; and some way or other those boys grew up to be good, stalwart fellows, who could go out and take care of themselves anywhere in the game, and the girls were jolly and attractive; they were social favorites, and everybody was happy.

Now, what was the difference?

It was the difference in the amount of government they had. One home was governed to death, and the other home was controlled by reason and affection.

You good folks here tonight go around church once in a while and sing that old song, "Where is my wandering boy tonight?" and how you sob it out, and how your heart strings are pulled as you wonder where he is. But when you have finished the song you go on home and never take time to look him up. You just put your wondering in the tune and the boy can wander.

Now you wonder why you cannot keep your boy at home. Did you ever go and look at the place where you try to keep him?

You know a boy is just an animal. He likes to fight and scuffle and run. He detests soap and water; they are against his nature.

Did you ever look around the boy's room; oh, you good mother; God bless you. You want to fix up everything just nice for that boy. And what do you do. You fix it up to suit your feminine mind. You turn that animal in there and expect him to stay. (Laughter.)

Lace curtains on the windows, pretty little white bed, a little spindle legged stand, a chiffonier and a doily on the table, a little pink cherry blossom wall paper.

A doily in a boy's room.

And you dress him up in white and curl his hair and say, "Now, Honey, don't you go out and play with those boys next door," and when he does, you say, "Oh, Willie, oh, Willie," and Willie comes back again. And you wonder why that boy goes away from you and your heart breaks, and you sob out, "Oh, why is it that I could not keep him."

You could if you had stopped to understand him.

You say, "I loved him to death." Yes, but you did not understand him. I would rather have a boy understand five minutes than to have him loved all day.

Now why didn't you let the boy fix it and let him have it on his own plan and say, "Now, my son, how would you like to have this room." And the first thing that would come down would be the curtains and the next thing that would come up would be the doily. Give that to sister. He takes that little spindle legged chair and he shoots it off as far as he can.

Cleans everything out of there; rips off the wall paper with the pink violets and exchanges it for some with hunting scenes, hills and mountains; puts a leather curtain up; takes that carpet off the floor; throw out the chiffonier, nad put in an old bureau that makes a good fort, and he gets some good, square, stout-legged tables and chairs that can be used for sliding down bill, a pitched battle or anything else, and he paints the floor and puts in a rug, just big enough to keep his feet warm while he dresses in the morning, and he has some bows and arrows and some wild west pictures and some country magazine and some war story books and a ball bat and a catcher's mitt and some boxing gloves and dumb bells and three or four rusty old guns and a leather spread for the bed and if you will let him alone he will take care of it and everything will be always right in its place, right smack down in the center of the floor.

Oh, God bless you; you could not drive that boy away from there with a club. That is his den; that is the place where the animal likes to live, and every other kid in the neighborhood will be in there with him, unless you lock the front door. And every boy that has not that kind of place says, "Oh, how I wish I had a real mother."

It will spoil the furniture a little. It will spoil some of your feminine tastes; but it will save your boy.

He will not grow up to be any Willie. He will be Bill. And when you come to that place in your life where husband is gone and you must lean on some strong support, where you would have a Willie boy, with weakly lungs, Bill will take care of mother, and the only one that will ever take him away from you—it will not be any dance hall, nor any pool hall, nor any club, nor any saloon, nor any card game, nor anything else of that nature—the only power that will ever take Bill out from there will be some bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, brown-haired loving girl, that has got a head full of sense. When he takes her along he says, "All right, mother; I am going to start a little nest of my own, but there will always be a corner for you."

Say! If we could only beat that doctrine into the head of the average hysterical woman in America, the boy problem would be solved.

God bless you; you have got yourselves all excited and worked up that something outside has got your boy and you had fifteen years' start of everybody.

Now it is just as true in community life as in home life. Exactly the same.

I want to ask you tonight—the strange boy who comes into the city of Omaha, the strange young man who comes into the city of Omaha, how many of you people ever open the door of your home to that boy?

Where would he go tonight if he were a stranger in this city to have companionship?

Think it over.

The churches are all closed. Somebody has talked about starting a pool hall or a club hall there, and they say, "Oh, this is for the worship of God; you open up about three hours a week, and what do you do then? Stick him down in a pew and a fellow goes up in the pulpit and makes him a prohibition speech.

If he can come into Omaha and find himself a room and submerge himself socially and struggle through for a while, somebody will begin to think there is something in him.

You didn't think of that, did you?

Where does that boy go when he is hungry? To the parsonage or to the back end of a bar? Who feeds him? The church or the saloon?

What right have you got to renounce a man who is doing every day what you won't do at all?

I say to you that when you people will put up a better institution, that will give a warmer welcome and more genuine fellowship, a higher ideal of life and companionship than the saloon does, you won't have to vote on the saloon. It will die.

You are trying to create a social vacuum in society. And you think that when you destroy the only social center that the average young man has that he is just going to hang by his tumb-nails on moral platitudes and dry speeches.

Now you go away from here and talk that.

What are you proposing tonight to put in place of the saloon? You never thought of that. You just thought you were going to kick a hole into space and that it would remain a hole.

I will tell you what you are getting ready to do.

You are going to destroy the open, public places, where men gather together, and, instead, Omaha will have, in thirty days after the saloons close, Omaha will have enough clubs, that are barricaded by locked doors, with a bigger membership than the saloon customers are now.

What are you going to do about it then?

The saloon is the only club that has a public charter, into which officers of the law and the public generally can go.

But the private club, that lives behind a private charter, says to the officer, "You stay out, and everybody else."

In the city of St. Louis, in the year 1909, I made a canvass of the city. I did not take a horn with me and blow it every time I was going down the street. That is the way most of those fellows work. I had the assistance of the plainclothes men on the police force for two years.

We found 87 clubs, Sunday clubs, that had a membership of 26,000.

Now, God bless you, good people; you don't think sixteenth inches ahead of your nose. You got mad at that saloon and you don't know why. But those fellows have told you that is where all the hell comes from. And you never asked yourself the question, "Well, after the saloon, what?" That never struck you. After the saloon, what?

After the saloon, the open, public, regulated place, comes the secret drinking place. And everything that goes behind a barred door generally gets worse than better.

If I had my way about it, not a saloon in America would have a screen in the front or on the door any more than a restaurant.

If it is right to take a drink of beer or wine in church at the Lord's table, it is not wrong to take it right on top of that table right there.

To allow people to get themselves so worked up about a man taking a drink of wine in a saloon or at home and go to the Lord's table and take it, I cannot figure it out; that is just honest; I can't understand it.

But you do.

The way to reduce drunkenness is to have more public drinking. OUCH!!!

Did you ever attend a German picnic? I have. Where the beer is free? Did you ever see anyone intoxicated there? I never did.

But when you put the lid on, and there is a barrel of it down behind the sign-board, at 25 cents a bottle, the first fellows to it will never give up, until they have got every drop that is there.

I am speaking only as a student of conditions; I don't want any offense taken at anything I am saying. Why do you find so few drunkards amongst the Jewish people? They have carried their wine from the time you meet them in history. And there is a lower percentage of drunkenness amongst the Hebrews than any of the older races.

What has happened to the Mohammedan in the same period of time; the Turk, who is a prohibitionist, by religion? Where is his race as compared with the chosen of God?

Why don't you use your common sense.

Is there anything particularly defective, morally, with the German nation? (Applause.)

I got you back there.

And yet you poor, misguided people have worked yourself into such a frenzy when some blatherskite would get up and say that drinking reduced the morality of the people you believe it.

I defy any man in this audience, or any man that may come to this platform, to stand up and say that because he don't drink anything stronger than grape juice, he is morally better than millions of men who use wine and beer and whisky every day.

That is the doctrine of the Pharisee, and nothing else; and simply because you call it Dry, instead of Pharisseeism, as Jesus Christ did, does not change the fact of the thing.

The bigotry of religious fanaticism would make the devil laugh.

Sane government.

Why is it that these men who come here from Kansas have to twist their statements to make them seem plausible.

Don't you worry; that Governor Capper lad will be taken care of before this campaign closes. If Capper told the truth that time, it is the first time since he has been governor that he ever did tell the truth, when he was talking outside of Kansas. And you can send him a telegram tonight that Meeker said so and invite him over here and I will stand pat.

Now why is it that these people, coming from these places, are compelled absolutely to apologise, as the man who spoke from this platform last night said, right within fifteen feet of where I am, "I have not got any facts with me; I have not got my stuff along, and the man who presided said, "What the hell is the differences; tell them anything."

Too much government breaks down of its own weight.

Now then suppose that we were going to propose a law here for this state that we would do away with all regulations in regard to the selling of all kinds of liquor; would you stand for it? Why, you would think it was idiotic.

Suppose we were going to pass a law here to destroy all regulations in regard to the selling of any commodity in this state except liquor, you would think it was idiotic.

And yet you say that liquor is the most dangerous of all things that man use, and you still provide that they can have all they want. You don't want to control in any way the dispensing of it; just let it take its own chances.

Now, my friends, this is only the beginning of your legislation. You will have to pass a law for the purpose of enforcing it.

And you will have to direct yourselves to this question:

Why is it that with 25 years of reform, so-called reform, when we have been passing reform laws by the thousands, and we get more people in jail than we ever had in the reform territory; we have got more penitentiaries filled than we ever had, and we have more law violation than we ever had, in the face of 25 years of reform.

Did you ever think of that?

Did you ever see one of those cadaver faced chaps come around and tell you how the world is going to hell, to the demnition bow wows? And what does he do? He refers you to the criminal record of the country. He says, "There she goes."

Now at the same time that our jails are filling up and our penitentiaries, there was never a time in the history of the world when there had been as many great movements, nationally speaking, for the amelioration of the sufferings of the unfortunate as now. Never.

Now I am talking of the currents of activity; not the thermometer.

Why?

The great things that are before our national legislature; before our state legislatures; looking for shorter hours for women; looking for the saving of children from being ground up in factories, industries; looking for pensions and compensations to those who are injured in the train service; all of these things.

Dou you find the drys boosting these movements?

I defy you to show where the Anti-Saloon League of America yet ever, in one state in this nation, or at the national capital, has gone to the front for a single law for shorter hours or child labor or for any of those things that make the conditions of man better.

Now let us consider this for a moment.

Here we are tonight, a society, a government, a community. Now we are just as good as we are or we are just as bad as we are, individually, regardless of anything that the government might say to us at this moment.

We pass a dozen ordinances; now these twelve rules are to regulate this society, and we go about our business. Every time we violate one of these twelve ordinances they grab us and fine us or put us in jail and turn us loose again. Well, we go along with these twelve for a while and we have another meeting, and we enact twelve more; we have another meeting and we enact twelve more; and at the end of ten years, where we started with twelve we now have one hundred. That means there are one hundrd chances to grab every man in the crowd where there were twelve in the beginning; he has one hundred rules to keep where he had only twelve. The chances are that no man can obey all of these rules; he breaks one of them; he is grabbed and taken into court, ground through the mill and marked a criminal.

You remember what Jesus Christ said when he was here that whoever violates the least of these is guilty of all.

What does that mean? It means that if you fail in society to do what? To take care of that fellow that has been yanked into court for a violation of any city ordinance when he comes out again and wants to start in the fight for life. You say, have you been in jail? He says, yes. You never asked him why. You say, I don't want you. He had just as well be guilty of robbery as exceeding the speed limit. In the eyes of society he is a criminal when he had no criminal instincts whatever.

And I want to say to you tonight, the difference between the doctrine of the man who would save society by law and the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who would save man by love, is just this:

On the Sabbath day, when the Master went through the fields, his disciples gathered the grain, rubbing it out, and eating it. A lot of these snoop committees, the drys of that day, were looking after it, and they said, this is a violation of the law, ah, ah! Shame labor on the Sabbath, no, sir; that is against the law; that man talks about being the Son of God, and look what he did. And then He said to them, don't you know that the Sabbath was made for man; not man for the Sabbath.

Did you ever get that straight through your head?

They figure that the law was made and then God made man to keep it.

Men talk about the dignity of the law. If there is to e any dignity to the law, it must be a dignified law.

If you want men to respect law, pass respectable laws, and they will.

Now these fellows on the other side want a maximum of law with a minimum of freedom. The side wants a maximum of liberty and a minimum law.

Do you get me? (Long continued applause.)

SANE GOVERNMENT means to take reasonable control in the directing of all social activities.

Now as long as you are going to permit me to bring it in by the jugfull, or by the barrel, or by the automobile, or the carload, or the trainload, as your proposed law will permit them to do, and you are going to permit them to keep it anywhere they choose, and to use all their hides will hold, does it not seem to you, using just ordinary horse sense, that you should keep control of the distribution of it?

If I was going to monkey with a rattlesnake, I would rather have it in a glass box where I could see it than have it in a hole or running around in the grass where I never know where it was going to strike me or when it was was going to strike me.

And everything you say against liquor, as long as you say that men can have it to use; the very argument you put up as to the danger of it, is just that much stronger argument for keeping control of the distribution of it.

Why, I can't see how a man who uses his head for anything, or keeps his backbone behind from unraveling, can't see that.

Now, some of these good dry fellows are afraid that they will be accused of standing up for the saloon if they stand for government.

Well, after the saloon, what?

The next thing that comes —. You have got about how many voters here in this town? About 30,000 men. If you have 30,000 men in this town, you have 25,000 drinkers. That is the lowest. You won't find 5,000 teetotallers in the town.

Now, then, that being true, suppose that the state of Nebraska out-votes the people of these cities; while this city will vote from two to three to five to one against this law. (Applause.)

How, in the name of common sense, do you expect to enforce that law when the men here are five to one against it?

What are you putting up to the police force of this town? What are you putting up to the whole governmental system of this town?

I will tell you what will happen: Just exactly what has occurred in Maine, and in every other state where they have had this for any length of time.

In the state of Maine, the sheriffs of counties are elected on a platform of enforcement or nonenforcement of the law. Yet there are people who believe they can get a law and ram it down the throats of men and make them stand for it.

What next fellows?

The organization of your whole pody politic to create a system of corruption and for the defeat of your law.

That is what you get.

You don't need to tell me that the governors and the governors of Kansas have not had their frame-ups with the bootleggers of Kansas. You don't need to tell me if they never wanted to enforce that law over there the governor of the state would not know about it.

Look at the record of Oklahoma! The most shameful and disgraceful of any new state in America. Corruption without mention and without shame.

The bootleggers of Oklahoma are the most powerful political organization in Oklahoma.

What is the result?

Nebraska has sent twenty men to the asylums with alcoholic psychosis; Kansas has sent seventy, and Oklahoma has sent 139.

Why?

Because the people of Nebraska got their liquor anywhere; getting away from the harder drinks, they turned to beers and wines, to the lighter drinks. But when it has to be sneaked in, in Bibles, and in suit cases and hearses and caskets and oil tanks and box car and twine packages and canes and everything else, they will always get the stuff that has the most kick in it for the least amount of space. (Laughter.)

Bootleggers' paradise! Kansas and Oklahoma.

That is what you will get in your government system.

Now, why can't you enforce the law?

Oh somebody says, of course we have a law against killing, but then men go and kill each other, and we do not change the law.

You do not change the law; you do not put in a constitutional amendment that it can be used for medicinal purposes or sacramental; you do not say that it can be used for mechanical or industrial purposes.

Now, what is the trouble with that law?

After all, it is public sentiment that polices a community, and the police with a club in his hand only reflects public sentiment.

Some men around here say, Well, look at the saloon conditions in Omaha!

Well, they are just what you want them to be. They are just what Omaha is satisfied with.

I want to tell you that three nights' investigation by certain beloved gentlemen, in the right spot, with a good stiff spine, will do more to shut off the Omaha saloons than seventy-five sermons when there is nobody there. And the cancellation of about three saloon licenses will make the rest of these fellows see daylight quicker than all the elections than you can hold.

You do not want to enforce the law. It might get you in bad. You just want to vote. Nothing more. Just vote.

This law is different from the other laws in regard to theft and murder and crimes of that kind, in that its jurisdiction is limited to the community that passes on it.

A man, in this state, could steal an automobile and go to New York and you could bring the man and the car and the fellow that bought it all back together, if he knew it was a stolen car, and send them all to prison and return the car to the owner.

And the fellow in the bootleg business, when you start after him he hears you coming and he just steps over the line into Iowa and he says good night, and the Iowa sheriff can't send him back, nor you can't get him. And in the next place the fellow that bought his goods don't have to give them up. That is the difference between him and the automobile fellow. He keeps the goods and don't have to appear against him either.

Now let me tell you, if you would put a law on the statute books that if a man would purchase an automobile and didn't know it was a stolen car, if you put it on the books that he could keep it