

PROHIBITION AGAINST HUMAN NATURE

BY HENRY BOURNE JOY

It would be startling perhaps to many of our good but blind American citizens to advocate the cause of temperance and common sense in America, where alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Yet that is just the object of this article.

When Mr. Lloyd George spent some time in this country a few months ago he was asked what he thought of Prohibition. He replied that he had never been in a country where Prohibition existed. Mr. Lloyd George did not mean to say that America did not have adequate laws and hundreds of thousands of police and Prohibition officers to make our beloved country bone dry. He simply inferred that Prohibition did not exist as a practical fact.

In the recent hearing before the committee of Congress in which elaborate statements by the leading Prohibition enforcement officers and some of the leading Prohibitionists proved that their work was effective, that this country was practically bone dry and that they were earning their money, the tendency was to leave the impression upon those studying the details of that hearing that Prohibition was effective, that crime had decreased by half or thereabouts, that the jails were being closed and actually being sold—and it was so stated.

On the other hand, the average intelligent American citizen who goes about his business at home and abroad with his eyes open and his intelligence doing business, is confronted constantly with a contrary picture, that America's remarkable murder list continues its high rate per thousand of population, and that the various major crimes adhere well to their average level of years past per thousand of population.

We seem to be confronted with the cold fact that those presenting the Prohibition enforcement side of the case present their side of the argument and their supporting facts for that argument as they see the picture, but the other side of the picture, the actual, practical side of Prohibition as it affects all the people, is not presented at all. This is but a natural condition. None of us like to speak out and incur the attacks of fanatical

zealots pressing for an impractical bone dry Prohibition condition. It is but natural that people should desire to take the easiest course and attend to their own affairs. However to very many who voted for Prohibition, as I did, it appears that America must open its eyes and recognize that human nature cannot be changed by legal enactment.

The great vast bulk of the people of America are not bone dry Prohibitionists; neither are they rabid wets and drunks and sots; the great average mass of the people of the United States, it seems but fair to assume, are people favoring the best interests of the greatest number of people in America, regardless of the views of extremists at either end. Temperance is a cause that all the people in America, except the extremists, are cordially in favor of.

Very many people who were righteously enraged at the conditions existing in the old saloon days, after trying to curb those evil liquor conditions then existing, voted for the Eighteenth Amendment, believing that the practical interpretation of the Eighteenth Amendment would be a resulting beneficial temperance to all the people. However, the Prohibition pendulum swung so far at that time, pushed so vigorously by the fanatical zealots, who were supported by common sense people seeking a practical temperance, that the Volstead Act was passed in the great wave of anti-saloon prejudice, making any beverage containing alcohol content contrary to the law.

Then America settled down to a period of seeking to enforce the bone dry law. Even those who felt that it had gone too far said: "Well, let's try it, we may be wrong; let's give Prohibition a fair chance."

Five years have rolled by, and many think that Prohibition has had its chance. Many have come to think and believe that after the most diligent effort for five years by the Government of the United States of America to enforce bone dry Prohibition upon our people, it has totally failed. Vast appropriations have been made by the National Government and by the State Governments to no avail. In Michigan one of the leading State officials recently said that the more money we appropriate and the more people we employ to enforce Prohibition, the more freely is liquor available.

Wherever we go in this broad land alcoholic beverages are available to those who inquire and seek them. These alcoholic beverages consist chiefly of imported "hard" liquor in the original package, smuggled into the country across our three thousand mile long Canadian border line, across our fifteen hundred mile Mexican border, or landed on our upwards of ten thousand miles of coast line. These alcoholic beverages also consist of every conceivable distilled product made by people in every corner of the country for their own consumption and that of their friends, and also for sale. Light wines and beers are not available at all. The people buy hard liquor in which they can get the most alcohol for the least cost. The conditions among the youth of the country generally, and especially observable in university cities, are severely criticized by some of the leading educators of our country.

The almost countless millions of dollars which have been appropriated and spent in five years to accomplish the enforcement of bone dry Prohibition have failed in that accomplishment. Not only has this country failed, as naturally must be the case, to make itself bone dry at the vast cost of the appropriations for the dry armies and dry navies, but also it has been foregoing during that period a revenue which it might readily have in its national treasury of approximately five hundred millions of dollars *per annum*, excise tax, and an amount of money approximating that sum has been going to the purveyors of alcoholic beverages, whom some people call bootleggers and others call merchant princes.

The bone dry Prohibitionists still zealously advocate more appropriations for larger dry armies and larger dry navies and more laws of still further inquisitorial search and arrest, when not only are our jails and prisons largely full of victims of bad liquor and of those arrested for purveying such liquor, but also are our United States Courts choked with Prohibition cases to so great an extent that normal industrial, commercial and personal important business and litigation of our people is largely at a standstill. Our Courts are consigning to jail to associate with thugs, murderers, burglars and every sort of villain a large number of decent young men who have taken a chance of making easy money by purveying liquor across the borders. Men have always taken such risks for easy money and men always will take such risks for easy

money. They are not cheating our customs nor defrauding the Government of revenue, because there is no duty on the goods imported. They take the risk for the easy money. Again human nature prevails.

Have the American people lost their balance wheel of common sense so that they can no longer understand human nature? We might as well legislate against the natural functions of existence as to seek to continue on our present path towards a complete disrespect for our laws and for the natural rights of a free people.

It was once stated that this country could not survive half slave and half free. It is perfectly safe to state today that this country cannot survive with half of its people trying to put the other half of its population in the penitentiaries of our country for following the natural dictates of human instincts.

There must be some leaders big enough and brave enough to stand out and save this country from the disastrous disregard of our Constitution and of our laws, which laws as they pertain to Prohibition and which Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution are absolutely contrary to human nature.

HENRY BOURNE JOY.

THE WORKINGMAN'S VIEW OF PROHIBITION

BY JAMES P. HOLLAND

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To write an article dealing with the effects of Prohibition from the standpoint of the workingman seems to be quite a futile undertaking. Prohibition has reached the point where it must be dealt with from the standpoint of the American citizen, without particular regard to any class of our citizenry.

The workingman, as an American citizen, still clings to the idea that the American theory of government, even if not perfect, is yet by far the best ever devised by the sons of man. The workingman still holds that the American people are capable of self government, not only politically, but also individually and morally.