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PUBLIC VOICE  
Superintendent of Anti-Saloon League  
Writes on Question

MR. EDITOR:  
In a recent issue of your paper appeared an editorial under the title: "The Liquor Traffic." Running parallel with some things splendidly stated in that article, are a few other matters that I am convinced you are mistaken in, and which, if allowed to go unanswered, might lead many astray. For this reason, I am moved to write in correction of the statements that I believe are erroneous, and ask you to give the correction equal publicity with your earlier statement.

Speaking of Oregon's interest in the prohibition question in this campaign, you say: "It (Oregon) has come up the by-path of Local Option, strewn everywhere with 50 per cent alcohol patent medicine and 'near-beer bottles.'" This seems to have been said as though local option was to blame for these two kinds of alcoholic consumption. Has it never occurred to you that this language of yours is descriptive of conditions brought about by the men into whose hands the Initiative Bill No. 328, would place the government of all our cities, on the liquor question? You seem to favor this bill; but you surely have forgotten that it is these same men behind Initiative Bill 328 who are the 'near-beer' and fifty-per cent-alcohol-patent-medicine men you call attention to as making local option a farce.

You mention also in your editorial that there were "fifteen men in jail in Malheur county for boot-legging;" that there "were scores of men arrested at Gardiner, Condon, Madras, Roseburg and a dozen other places." Don't you know (for it is a fact) that the men who have supplied these bootleggers with liquor and have encouraged them to trample the Local Option law under foot are the identical men who are behind the Home Rule bill No. 328, and who want now to have the privilege of regulating the liquor saloons in all our cities?

You note also another matter, in which we fully agree with you, namely: that "the near-beer resorts scrape off the label on beer that is nearer. The contents are the same as before," and sell it in dry communities. Don't you know (for it is true) that the men who ship this "beer that is nearer" to the men who sell it in dry communities with the label scraped off are the very men who want to pass the Home Rule bill that will enable them to absolutely control the liquor traffic in Oregon.

You remark also that "the collections on distilled liquor and beer licenses are nearly \$57,000 larger than last year," as reported by "Collector of Internal Revenue Dunn." Hasn't it occurred to you that that could not be true unless it was also true that the very men who by their very trade produced this increase did so only by violating the law of this state, and that these are the very men who are now by this Home Rule bill asking to have the government of the cities of our state entrusted to them? Men, who in all these ways have tried, and too often successfully, to make a farce of the Local Option law, are by this Rum Ruin Amendment asking to be authorized to make and enforce the laws that are to regulate and restrain their own lawless traffic. The men who have so grossly disregarded the sacredness of law, and who have trampled under foot the express will of the people, now ask the power of legislation on the liquor traffic conferred upon them.

You say once more, "In the face of these facts and statistics, one pauses to ask what increase in lawbreaking and liquor consumption will be in evidence if the entire state votes itself into the dry column." Would it not rather be reasonable for you to make this serious inquiry: If in opposition to law and the expressed will of the sovereign people of Oregon the liquor men have increased their sales of intoxicants, what will be the lawful conditions if they should succeed in adopting an amendment to the constitution sweeping from the statute book all laws now restraining the liquor traffic.

I wonder, Mr. Editor, if you have seriously considered what this Amendment No. 328 would accomplish if approved by the people. Allow me to suggest the first and most immediate evils that would flow from such a consummation. Every restrictive law would be repealed. The law against selling liquor on election days, selling to minors, keeping saloons open on Sunday, selling to women without meals, allowing women within saloons, selling to confirmed drunkards, placing saloons near schools and churches; in fact, all law, state and local, on the liquor question would be by this enactment wiped from our code, and the liquor saloon would stand as a special favorite entrenched in the constitution of the state. Do you wish any such thing as that? Do

you suppose that the people of the state will for a moment commit their dearest interests to any such band of men as would, under the deceptive guise of home rule, seek the ruin of all peace, purity and prosperity in our cities? I am sure you do not believe it.

You say again, this Home Rule bill will, if passed, "give prohibition that really prohibits if a community wants it." You have already in this same editorial, said that the Local Option law did not give prohibition in the counties that have passed it by great majorities, but that it gave a kind of regulation that was well marked with failure—"patent medicine and 'near-beer bottles.'" But, is it not plain, Mr. Editor, that if the Home Rule law under the name of Local Option failed in prohibiting saloon evils, by merely changing its name from Local Option to Home Rule will not make it any more effective. As a matter of fact, our people well know that the men who disregard the people's will under the name of Local Option will as certainly trample it under foot when it is named Home Rule.

The Home Rule people ruthlessly break the Local Option law in Ashland, Roseburg, Cottage Grove, Eugene, Silverton, LaGrande, Vale, and many other dry towns. Will they not break the same law in the same cities if it was passed under the name of Home Rule? The fact is, all the liquor men want Home Rule for is, that they may make it a nesting place within the state from which to issue their flood of strong drink to the dry territory. If Home Rule were adopted as the state policy, if every city in Oregon but one would then vote Local Option as their city policy, from that one there would flow a constant stream of beer and whiskey to break down the law and dishonor our manhood. You cannot keep whiskey and beer in Portland under Home Rule restrictions. The men who make and sell damnation for their fellow men for the sake of the dollar that is in it will not observe the law passed by any community in the state outlawing the accursed stuff. Prohibition of the manufacture and sale is the only sure and safe cure.

J. R. KNOEDLE,  
Supt. Oregon Anti-Saloon League.  
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