

N. Y. World's Editorial Appraisal of Literary Digest's Prohibition Poll

A poll of nearly five million Americans on the prohibition question has been completed by the Literary Digest, with the following results:

Those favoring the continuance and strict enforcement of the Volstead act: 1,464,098, or 39.5 per cent.

Those favoring modification of the Volstead act to permit light wines and beer: 1,399,314, or 29.1 per cent.

Those favoring repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment: 1,943,952, or 49.4 per cent.

The total of those who wish either repeal or modification of the Volstead act to permit light wines and beer is 3,342,266, or 69.5 per cent.

The accuracy of these figures as an index of public opinion has, of course, been challenged. It is said

that the ballots sent out by the Literary Digest reached more people in cities than in rural districts, where dry sentiment is strongest; that even the careful methods employed in checking ballots could not prevent opponents of the law from voting twice; that friends of the law, meantime, make it their practice to boycott all straw ballots.

There is no precise way of proving or disproving the truth of any of these statements. Let us assume that they are true and that in the circumstances of the case the Digest poll cannot aspire to represent the opinion of the country accurately. There remains one test which supplies a wholly accurate and instructive basis of comparison. This test is the poll taken by the Literary Digest itself in 1922. Any criticism which can fairly be made of the present poll can be

made with equal fairness of the poll in 1922. The two polls stand on a par. The basis of comparison between them rests on solid ground and the reliability of any conclusion drawn from such a comparison cannot be challenged.

In this earlier poll we find, as we find now, that the industrial states in the east and north are opposed to the law and that such dry sentiment as exists is to be found chiefly in the west and south. There is this difference in the present case, however. The figures show that in those sections favoring the law, dry sentiment is at least holding its own; whereas in those sections opposed to the law, wet sentiment has made spectacular gains. In Kansas, for example, the percentage of those favoring enforcement of the law as opposed to either modification or repeal was 38.3 in the poll of 1922; in the poll of 1929 this percentage is 57.7. In Oklahoma, second only to Kansas in its loyalty to the law, the percentage in favor of enforcement in 1922 was 59.4; in 1929 it is 56.9.

Meantime, in the populous in-

dustrial states we note a gain in wet sentiment which really deserves to be called astonishing. In 1922 the percentage of voters in New York favoring either modification or repeal was 71.3—already large enough to be impressive; but in 1929 this figure has increased to 80.9. In Illinois the figure for 1922 was 62.6; in 1929 it has increased to 75.5. In Massachusetts the figure for 1922 was 62.1; in 1929 it was up to 71.8.

Such figures for individual states are impressive, but they are regarded by the dregs as meaningless straw ballots, but referenda on questions of changing state enforcement codes, in which the dregs were compelled to vote if they wished to preserve the status quo. In these three referenda, 1,454,603 people voted against strict enforcement of the amendment and the Volstead act; 1,781,439 voted in favor of strict enforcement. The dregs won all three referenda. Their percentage of the aggregate vote was 55.1. The wet percentage of the aggregate vote was 44.9.

What do we find if we now turn to the vote in these three states in the Literary Digest poll in this

same year, 1929? We find that these states polled 84,498 wet votes to 56,128 dry votes, giving the wets a percentage of 60.8.

In the Digest vote the wets polled 60.8 per cent. In official votes on real enforcement questions they polled 44.9 per cent. There is a difference in percentages of 15.9. The figures, at least in these three instances, support the contention that there are many dry voters who either do not receive ballots in such a poll as the Digest poll or who boycott such a test of sentiment.

We arrive at these conclusions:

1. On the basis of figures whose accuracy cannot be challenged because they rest on a valid basis of comparison, wet sentiment—whatever its present strength—is rapidly gaining ground. In the Literary Digest figures it has increased from 49.8 per cent to 69.5 per cent within eight years.
2. If the figures for Ohio, California and Massachusetts in 1922 are used as a standard by which to measure the difference in senti-

ment as reflected in straw ballots and in real elections, it is necessary to discount the Literary Digest figures by a substantial margin. This margin was 15.9 in the cases of these three states in 1922. If this figure is deducted from the wet percentage in the present poll, it would bring this percentage down from 69.5 to 53.6 and suggest that the country is really not nearly 70 per cent in favor of changing the present law or repealing it, but a little more than 50 per cent in favor of repeal or change. The figures here are necessarily guesswork, but the basis of the test seems fair.

3. Finally, whether wet sentiment be placed at 69.5 per cent, or 53.6 per cent, or even at some lower figure, to make allowance for every possible factor which might affect the result, it seems perfectly clear that at the very minimum at least 40 per cent of the people of the country are opposed to strict enforcement of this law, eleven years after its enactment.

To enforce the law in the face of this opposition is patently impossible.

MOSCOW, May 31—(AP)—Sober disturbances being blamed, many foreign visitors are coming to Moscow that the hotels can not house them all and many are being sent to rooms with private families. American engineers, and business men are in the van of the influx.

MONTAUBAN, France, May 31—(AP)—Floods which took hundreds of lives here a few weeks ago entered the Ingres Art Museum, housed in a building erected in 1659, and many valuable works were damaged. The museum was named for the painter Jean Auguste Ingres, who was born here.

ALKANTRA, Portugal, May 31—(AP)—Portugal's fishing fleet of 429 motor boats and 15,587 sailing vessels, manned by 55,000 men, ranks her among the great fishing countries of the world. The catch last year was valued at \$10,000,000.

A county traffic bureau with a fixed schedule of fines to expedite handling of cases of violators has been proposed at Grand Rapids, Mich.

ANNOUNCING THE PURCHASE OF THE FIRESTONE ONE-STOP SERVICE STATION

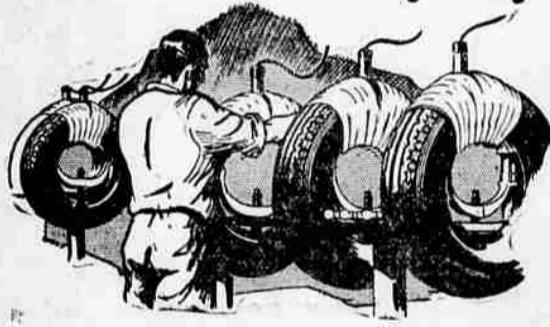
When You Think of Automobile Service - Think of

SMITH & WATKINS

"JIM" "BILL"

FIRESTONE ONE-STOP SERVICE

TIRES REPAIRED
-The Factory Way



Our tire repair equipment was designed by Firestone and we follow the factory methods in making our repairs.

When we repair a tire the repaired portion is just as flexible as the rest of the tire and will last as long.

Firestone TIRES



Firestone BATTERIES

Now we offer you a battery with the famous Firestone symbol of QUALITY... for every make and type of car... at the very lowest prices, quality for quality... extra power... longer life... greater dependability.

THE NEW
Firestone
BALLOON

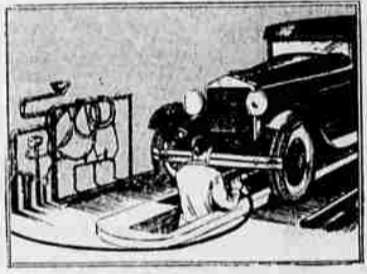
For Speed and Safety



YOUR CAR WASHED

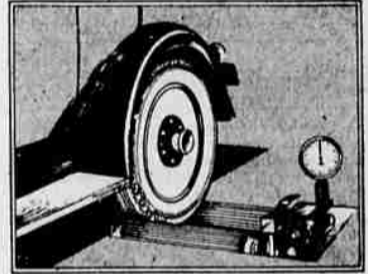
CLEAN AND IN A HURRY

\$1.75 and up



Genuine **ALEMITE** Lubrication

We use the exact weight and type of greases that are specified by the car manufacturer.



Scientific BRAKE RELINING

Let us test your brakes on our Cowdrey Dynamic Brake Tester. If they are in good condition, this machine will tell you... without charge. If your brakes need adjustment, scientific service awaits your order. If relining is necessary, we will apply Firestone Asbestos Lining... the toughest and strongest, at lowest prices consistent with quality of work.

DRIVE IN TODAY FOR FREE TEST

Ask About Gilmore Blu-Green Gasoline

We will be able to supply Gilmore gas in approximately two weeks. Costs no more than ordinary gasoline.

"JIM" "BILL"

SMITH & WATKINS

Phone 520

INVITE US TO YOUR NEXT BLOWOUT

Firestone Building Riverside at Ninth