

The Case Against Prohibition

THINGS have come to a point where the expression of opinion is no longer free and unrestrained. People will not speak out frankly what they think. This man trembles for his business, that man for his profession. All, or nearly all, keep silent. The prohibitionist has contrived to masquerade before the country as if he were of necessity a good man, a moral man, and his opponent of necessity a bad one.

The truth is that a very large part of the most honest and honorable opinion of the country is opposed to prohibition; and a very large part of the worst opinion, and the meanest elements in the community are strongly in favor of it.

I happen to be of those who are honestly and sincerely opposed to prohibition as a matter of principle. It is my candid belief that the adoption of prohibition in the United States is the worst disaster that has fallen upon the American republic since its origination. If it could last, it would undermine the foundations of Government itself. If it could last, it would, in time, bring down the strongest political fabric into anarchy and dissolution.

But prohibition cannot last, neither here nor there nor anywhere because it is based upon a lie. And a lie cannot endure. Prohibition declares it to be a crime to drink beer. And it is not a crime. The commonsense of every honest man tells him that it is not a crime to drink a glass of beer. All the Legislatures that ever sat cannot make it so. You can make your statutes as cruel and as sharp as you like. You may multiply your spies and informers, you may throw wide the doors of your penitentiaries, and you still cannot make it a crime; and the sharper and the harder your law the more public sense and public feeling will revolt against it.

Let those who have organized the legislative tyranny of prohibition look well to what is bound to follow. They are putting their trust