

A READY-MADE CAMPAIGN ISSUE AWAITS CHAMPIONING.

Clyde Hoey has announced as a candidate for the governorship. "Sandy" Graham was already in the running, as were Messrs. Kilpatrick and McRae of Charlotte. The contest, almost unquestionably, will be monopolized by Hoey and Graham.

For them, if they choose to take it up, is a ready-made issue awaiting—that of Enforcement of the Turlington Act versus the legalization of liquor sales in any way.

Hoey, of course, is the logical man to champion a real enforcement of the Turlington Act and the opposition to any kind, and all kinds, of legalized sales of alcoholic beverages. Hoey is a teetotaler and has been one of the main stays of prohibition. It seems not to have reached the record as to the total abstinence or non-abstinence of Lieutenant-Governor Graham. The latter, as all State politicians were for a score of years, has been an exponent of prohibition up to the recent session of the legislature, when he expressed the intention to vote for the Hill bill if there should be a tie in the senate. If that expression of purpose is an index to his attitude, he would qualify as a champion of the legalization of the sale of liquors under State supervision.

The legislature was so greatly influenced by anti-prohibition propaganda and itself became so great a propagandist that the majority of the legislators lost their heads before the session closed and made such a mess of liquor legislation that it will take the Supreme Court's decision to determine what the situation is to be. And, still, that decision will not allay the disturbance created by the activity of the wets in the General Assembly and the lack of courage on the part of the dries to make a stubborn offensive. The dries in the senate lost the opportunity of a decade to secure a real enforcement law when the senate turned down the Page bill, and the dry leaders outside the General Assembly may be reproached with the same lack of courage.

The tenor of Clyde Hoey's announcement does not indicate an intention to make an aggressive fight for prohibition. Yet the issue is here and is going to be settled. Without an aggressive fight for enforcement, which fight would present a golden opportunity for a real oratorical arraignment of old booze in any guise, prohibition is on its last legs in North Carolina.

The disrespect to the law assiduously cultivated by high and low has resulted in a prevalence of drinking that is lamentable, under whatever conditions drink is dispensed, and has so nullified the benefits of prohibition that even its champions of a life-time can find little reason to wish to maintain the law as a mere law. The only legitimate reason for opposing the legalized sale of liquor if the present prevalence of drinking is to continue is to avoid a partnership in the sale of the cursed stuff. But that reason would be eliminated if a method of legalized sale could be worked out that would result in fewer tragedies, fewer ruined lives and homes, since the responsibility of the citizen who declined to become a partner in the dispensation of liquor would, willy nilly, share the responsibility for the excess of ruin under a dead prohibition law over the degree of ruin that might occur under the kind of legalized sale suggested.

The contest, then, can scarcely longer be based upon the question of the mere retention of the prohibition law or non-retention. The retention of the law henceforth depends upon the expression of the

will of the people to have it enforced. If so many people in North Carolina have become drinkers that a majority of the voters will not support a proposition to make prohibition really effective, this writer, for one, will no longer worry about retaining the mere statute.

Unquestionably, it will be more difficult to get a majority for a real enforcement law, something on the order of the Page or the Jonas bill, than it will be to get another majority in favor of the retention of the law as a mere formula. It is conceivable that thousands who are determined to have their liquor might vote for retaining the law if they could expect to continue to get the liquor their appetites have been trained to demand. On the other hand, drinkers, both the ones who couldn't quit if they would and those who could quit if they had recognized the danger of the drink to themselves and of their example to others, would balk at voting for an enforcement measure that they knew meant that they couldn't get liquor from any source.

It is, therefore, questionable

whether the people would vote for a real enforcement bill, demoralization has gone so far. Yet that is the only thing now worth fighting for. And Clyde Hoey could make a wonderful fight for it. Yet it might diminish his chance to be governor. On the other hand, if it is the opportunity for service to his State that he seeks, as his announcement indicates, and no vain glory for himself, he can well afford to make enforcement of prohibition the main issue of his campaign. To save the tens of thousands of people who are now drinking liquor as a beverage from the fate that awaits many of them and to prevent the coming generation from being accursed as the present has been, if he should win, would be a service that cannot be excelled in any respect. And if he should fail to be elected governor, his achievements as a candidate should nevertheless be most gratifying, as a real show-up in North Carolina of the evil of liquor drinking should accomplish, with the help of the hundreds who would assist in the campaign, more for voluntary abstinence than can otherwise be accomplished.

Moreover, the cause of abstinence from the economic standpoint is one that ranks with any other, or

ahead of any other, cause that can become an issue in the campaign. The millions of dollars that now go into the purchase of illicit booze and the millions that would go into the purchase of legalized booze in case of the repeal of the prohibition law, and the time lost through drinking and the crimes due to it, with their attending costs, make a sum that can readily be supposed to overbalance all the other sums that could become issues in the campaign. And the liquor bill is an absolute loss. The tax funds, wherever they come from, are spent for a useful purpose.

The legislature's liquor follies of the last day of the session afford Mr. Hoey an opportunity to begin the fight at once, while his silver-tongue oratory assures a hearing that possibly no other man in the State could secure.

The issue is ready-made for Mr. Hoey. It will take courage to accept it. But if he hasn't the courage necessary, it makes little difference whether he becomes governor or not. He doesn't seek the governorship for his own personal gratification, he declares. Here is a risky cause, but one the acceptance of which will confirm his words of indifference to the honor which he seeks.

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