

The Franklin Press

and

The Highlands Maconian

Published every Thursday by The Franklin Press
At Franklin, North Carolina
Telephone No. 24

VOL. XLVIII

Number 43

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Entered at the Post Office, Franklin, N. C., as second-class matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year	\$1.50
Six Months	.75
Single Copy	.05

WEEKLY BIBLE THOUGHT

"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink."—Luke 1:15.

A Wise Move

PRESIDENT Roosevelt's executive order exempting small towns and villages from the provisions of the NRA was a wise move, one which should facilitate rather than hinder advancement of the national recovery program.

Small towns have peculiar conditions. They cannot be standardized like the larger towns and the great cities, for they have entirely different problems and their modes of living are even more variable than the topography of the country.

Strict enforcement of the NRA in small towns might have wiped many of them off the map. It would have been ideal if every village in the country could have been raised to the high standard of living that is the ultimate aim of the recovery program; but, alas, this is impractical, if not impossible.

Some press reports say that the President's action was motivated by the "pressure of adverse farm sentiment." This, doubtless, had something to do with his decision; but we hardly think this was his principal motivating reason. Rather, we believe, the chief executive realized, after trial, that the NRA imposed a burden on small towns which was too heavy for most of them to carry. He must have come to believe that, after all, the best way to influence conditions in the smaller communities is through the indirect effect which the recovery program in the more densely populated areas will eventually have on the rural sections.

It would be a fine thing if small town employers could pay the wages advocated by the NRA, but to do this would mean bankruptcy or else the employment of fewer persons for many of them. Certainly this would not serve the aims of the program.

It is to be hoped, however, that although small town employers have been exempted from the NRA, they will continue to comply, as far as possible, with the spirit of the recovery program.

An Opportunity Worth Taking

THE Press-Maconian is strongly opposed to the issuance of unnecessary bonds; but, after careful investigation, this newspaper has decided that the Town of Franklin would be missing a marvelous opportunity if it should fail to take advantage of the plan for financing long needed public improvements through the federal Public Works commission.

Under the plan proffered by the Public Works agency, the federal government will make an outright grant of 30 per cent of the cost of labor and materials of approved public projects. The rest of the money advanced will be secured on four per cent long term bonds. What better financing could be obtained?

Of course, it would be foolish to accept a loan even on this basis if the improvements were not needed. But Franklin sorely needs a sewage disposal plant; in fact, the state board of health probably will require the installation of such a plant within the next few years. The town's streets are in miserable condition; repairs cannot long be avoided. Engineers have informed town authorities that in all likelihood they will have to look for a new source of water supply if the town grows. The two wells which now furnish us with water would be insufficient for a larger population. Then, too, mountain wells, the engineers say, have a way of exhausting themselves. Perhaps one of the most needed improvements is larger water mains, which not only would afford better service to consumers, but also would improve fire protection facilities and pave the way for lower insurance rates.

Would it not be wise to take advantage of the Public Works financing plan, rather than to wait several years and issue bonds bearing higher interest rates? Would it not be better to do this work now, before the cost of materials reaches its peak? Wouldn't it be better to spend this money now, when employment is sorely needed by hundreds of our citizens?

Furthermore, we are reliably informed, there is a strong probability that if the town sells bonds to the Public Works commission it will never have to pay them back, at least not in full. Officials of the North Carolina Public Works board intimated this as forcibly as they could, without making a direct promise, in explaining how to obtain loans to a group of county and town officials meeting recently in Asheville. In all likelihood the federal government will assume responsibility for the bonds after the national recovery program has achieved its purpose.

The Prohibition Forum

Be Sure To Register

THE date of the Eighteenth Amendment referendum in North Carolina is drawing near and, let us remind our readers, Saturday is the last day for unregistered voters to qualify. On that day the registrars will be at their appointed places to list new voters. There is no need for those already registered to do so again; but all who are interested in the prohibition problem who are not registered should not fail to appear before a registrar on Saturday.

Occasionally one hears some voter comment that he will remain away from the polls. Such an attitude is difficult to defend. Certainly, the man who refuses to take the trouble to vote his convictions should not complain about the outcome.

It is a clean-cut issue and the election count should prove a true reflection of public opinion. Let's have no post-election alibis.

For Repeal

BY BLACKBURN W. JOHNSON

GEORGE J. Burnette, on the paid propagandists of the prohibition forces in North Carolina, made votes for repeal at the dry rally held in the Macon county courthouse Wednesday afternoon. A few more addresses like the one Mr. Burnette delivered, and Macon county will go overwhelmingly wet. No anti-prohibition orator the repealists could bring here would serve their cause better than did the arid gentleman from Raleigh.

It is too bad for the drys that their principal scheduled speaker, Dr. Zeno Wall, of Shelby, failed to appear, for he might have saved the day. We understand he is a good speaker; but even the mighty Clyde Hoey, he of the long-tail coat and medicine man haircut would have found it difficult to smooth over the blunders of Mr. Burnette.

Evidently the Raleigh propagandist thought he was speaking in a rampant Republican community, for he lambasted the Democratic party and its leaders without restraint. When he made the utterly baseless charge that the government at Washington was being Tammany-ized we fancied Alex Moore, head of the anti-repeal fight in Macon county, turned just a little bit redder and squirmed uncomfortably in his seat.

The speaker ripped North Carolina's two senators up the back for their declarations and predicted they would be defeated when they come up for reelection.

A Baseless Charge
His statements were so rash that even a dry zealot would have difficulty in accepting them. For instance, he charged that the press of the nation was subsidized by the brewery and distillery interests. Such a statement is utterly baseless on the face of it. Imagine trying to bribe the thousands of newspapers and periodicals of this country to change their editorial viewpoint! In the first place, it just couldn't be done. In the second place, the wet interests know that "bought opinion" loses its influence and is practically worthless. In the third place, it would require billions, not just millions, of dollars, far more than the brewers and the distillers would be willing to advance.

Newspaper opinion is molded, not by editors, but by readers. If a newspaper fails to reflect the opinion of its clientele it soon goes out of business. Yes, a newspaper can help lead public opinion; but it cannot consistently go against it. The reason why a majority of the press of the nation is wet is that a majority of the readers of the nation are wet.

One charge Mr. Burnette made in his address, we challenge him to prove. He made the flat statement that Arthur Brisbane, whose syndicated column appears in hundreds of newspapers throughout the country, had been paid "a cool five hundred thousand dollars by the brewery interests to color his writings" in favor of repeal. That is an allegation, which unless proved, constitutes a slander, a libel. The speaker said he could prove his charge, but he failed to do so. Such an accusation, made without giving supporting evidence, manifests an utter disregard for truth and fair dealings.

Let Mr. Burnette produce the proof, if he values his honor.

Against Repeal

BY MRS. J. W. C. JOHNSON

THE record of crime and corruption in connection with enforcement and lack of enforcement of prohibition laws, cited in last week's editorial in favor of repeal, is a sad chapter in our nation's history. But brought forward as an excuse for repeal, we believe there is insufficient ground. The word "excuse" is used advisedly, because corrupt and insincere officers of the law and crimes committed by such officers cannot constitute a sufficient reason for repeal of any law.

And, in the case of the Republican politician, who was personally dry because he "had to stand by his party's platform," but invited his friends to liquor parties where he dispensed a famous brand made

by his father's distillery—being later appointed to direct the national enforcement agency (with the aid, presumably, of his father's liquor)—we see, not a good citizen gone wrong, but a corrupt politician exploiting a high office.

In Defense of Police

The fact that policemen sample seized liquor cannot be advanced as a reason for repeal. Policemen are only human, and many have a thirst. We remember, however, one noble gesture by a group of policemen, that we must cite to the credit of policemen in general. The incident occurred in Gastonia about ten years ago, and is related here to "point a moral and adorn a tale." When our son Billy, then ten years old, heard his father tell how he had just witnessed the pouring of 75 gallons of corn liquor into the sewer on Main Street by the police department, Billy, trying to grasp the significance of this action, inquired, "Father, do people ever drink corn liquor?" Perhaps there are those of us who still admit cherishing the dream of a corn-liquorless world, when not only one little boy, but many, could grow to be ten years old without even knowing that "people ever drank corn liquor."

It has been suggested by a good citizen of Franklin that a woman's voice against repeal is "futile." Some of us can remember when the passage of the 18th amendment was considered so impossible that any effort supporting it was regarded as futile.

We can remember when the fight for equal suffrage was thought to be worse than futile by all save a few courageous women who eventually led the forlorn hope to victory in the 19th amendment to the constitution.

There was a time when any opposition to the institution of slavery was thought futile by wise men.

A Salutary Effort

Far from being futile, we judge an articulate and intelligent opposition to so serious a proposition as nullifying a constitutional amendment to be most salutary at this time.

While we are receiving assurances from many who will vote against repeal that they are voting for "temperance" and "law enforcement," we believe that a strong stand taken now by those opposing repeal will have a tremendously wholesome "psychological effect" upon unchastened repealists. The bug-a-boo of the politician will not be entirely removed when liquor flows freely and legally once more. There will be, we venture to predict, an uncomfortably large part of any constituency who will not forget that less boot-legging, less drinking, less crime, are promised "after repeal."

Those who doubt the efficacy of repeal to bring about the improvement in morals and social conditions promised by the repealists, would do well during the next few weeks to roll up as large a vote as possible against repeal. It will stiffen the backbones of the powers that be to live more nearly up to their pledges to the people, and will help all those sincerely desiring a strong public opinion back of their efforts.

While pleading guilty to the allegation of "idealism," we rejoice to acknowledge that the anti-repealists have not a monopoly on that virtue.

Still, we deem it wise for the opponents of repeal to register sufficient "realism" by going to the polls and voting their convictions. Do not place too much faith and trust in the idealism voiced by proponents of repeal.

The Prohibition Forum, The Franklin Press.

I would like space in your columns for a few comments on the situation that confronts us, and a word in answer to some of the arguments advanced by the repealists.

I want to begin by "prating of idealism and righteousness" and assure our editor "For Repeal" that I am for both of these as strongly as I know how to be, for "where there is no vision, the people perisheth," and righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

I do not know that God is on the side of the prohibition forces, but I do know that He is NOT on the side of the forces that would license alcohol and turn it loose upon a people who do not know how to control it. He is NOT on the side of a nation that would go into the liquor business in order that it might prey upon the weaknesses and indulgences of its people. He is NOT on the side of a nation that would relieve the income taxes of its richer citizens in order that the citizens of moderate means might assume these taxes.

There is no place in all of God's Word, so far as I know, that He ever placed His stamp of approval upon liquor in any form, but He does pronounce the direst warnings to those who would "tarry long at the wine." His Word to them is WOE! WOE! WOE! And any nation that will make it easier for men to drink than to stay

JUST HUMANS

By GENE CARR



"Where Are Y'runnin' To? Y'broke My Window!"
"Home to Get th' Money T'pay For It!"

sober is assured of God's disapproval.

But so much for that. I wanted to speak more directly to some of the arguments of the repealists, and to consider what I believe to be their best arguments.

The argument most used and for which the repealists have the best statistics on their side, is that there is more crime under prohibition than previously. The anti-repealists grant this. But we would remind you that there was a World War, which closed in 1918. No nation has ever been able to sow the seeds of malice, and hatred, and ill-will without reaping the harvests of murder, and homicides, and every other form of corruption. The crime of today is the backwash of the great World conflict. If this were a valid argument, we would find the crime wave appearing only in the United States. But the other nations of the earth have felt the same thing. It has been equally true in Canada, in England, in France, as well as in the U. S. This crime wave has always been the aftermath of any great conflict. And those of us who have given the matter any thought, are grateful to Almighty God that we had prohibition at least partially effective, in these days. Who can visualize what might have happened in this country if alcohol had been allowed to flow in unmeasured quantities throughout our land?

The second argument which the repealists use, is that there is more liquor in the land today than ever was known in the old days. Those who say this are unwilling to accept the available figures. In pre-prohibition days, according to government figures, the per capita consumption of alcohol was 22.4 gallons, or an average of more than 112 gallons per family. Under prohibition the estimate has been made (about the only figures I have are those of the Wickensham report which you quoted last week) that probably 25 to 30 gallons per family was being used today. This would mean that prohibition was 75 per cent to 80 per cent effective. And this is approximately the figure given by the Salvation Army, the Associated Charities, and other relief organizations, who perhaps have a better chance of learning the actual facts as to the effect of prohibition upon the land. They deal with the actual cases, and keep records from which to draw their conclusions.

In 1908, there was one retailer for each 333 persons, one for each 74 families, with a drink bill three times that of our national school bill, and twice that of the Federal government.

If this argument were true, why do the government figures show that the deaths from alcohol dropped from 5.2 per 100,000 to 1.0, in face of the fact that the report is that the liquor of today is far inferior to that of the old days? While, on the other hand, in the states where the law has no co-operation from state officials, the deaths from alcoholism are 116 per cent greater than in states having cooperation. (U. S. Census Report & Vote Record).

And further, if this argument is valid, why has the number of Keelcy Institutes decreased from 98 to 12, and the Neal Institutes from more than 100 to non-existence? You set forth in your columns that in the state of North Carolina "thousands of men and women have been treated for alcoholism in the state institutions for the insane." I challenge that statement. I am told by some of the doctors that our hospital has only a very small space reserved for these cases and that only a very few can be and are cared for there. (I am get-

ting additional figures on this point.)

Another argument being used by the repealists, is that there will be less bootlegging under the licensed system than under prohibition. No one can say what shall be. We don't know. We only know what has been and what is, and the records of the past and present are absolutely opposed to this argument. It was not true in South Carolina, my native state, under the dispensary system. I can remember the time that, in an adjoining community to my own, the pastor of the church in that community made the statement from his pulpit that he was informed that there were 13 stills in operation within a mile radius of the church, and that he had had pointed out to him the smoke from five stills in operation, by a respectable and truthful member of that community. My uncle was for many years the state constable in the upper part of South Carolina, and I can still remember his labors in the destruction of stills and arrests of bootleggers. The reports from the Canadian system do not bear out this argument, but report rather, that bootlegging has increased.

And why should there not be an increase? A bootlegger who cannot make and sell his wares for less than the proposed tax upon whiskey is not efficient and deserves no sympathy from anyone. The repealists are deluding themselves with the same misconception that ensnared the prohibitionists after they had secured the passage of the prohibition law—namely, that all that is necessary for the enforcement and success of a law is simply to have it placed upon the statute books, and people will obey. That is a snare and a delusion.

I am with the repealists in saying that I do not believe that we have found the best and most effective means of controlling Demon Alcohol, but I do believe that we have the best that has as yet been discovered, and that until the repealists or someone else offers a better one, I am going to vote to retain the prohibition law.

Yours sincerely,
J. A. FLANAGAN.

Baptist Church Notes

BY REV. EUGENE R. ELLER

Sunday school will meet at 9:45. A special offering for state missions will be taken. All who did not come prepared for this offering last Sunday, please try to do so this Sunday. We have an important lesson Sunday on the great subject of temperance. All teachers are urged to work for 100 per cent attendance on the part of their pupils.

The morning worship will meet at 11. The pastor will preach on the subject, "A Great Crisis Facing Our State," text, "He that bideth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds"—2 John:11.

Those attending the Macon County Singing Convention are most cordially invited to attend the 11 o'clock service, also the evening service at 8.

The B. Y. P. U.'s will meet at 7 and the evening worship will be at 8. The pastor's subject for the evening will be, "Jesus On the Cross."

Extension Circular No. 34 on "Killing and Curing Meat on the Farm" is now ready for distribution and copies may be obtained by writing the Division of Publications, State College, Raleigh.