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Canvass of 7,847 Editors Shows 7,393 Communities Against Abolishing Weed.

ANTIS LOSE THREE STATES.

Utah, Under Mormon Influence, Only Commonwealth to Adopt Prohibition Measure During Year.

"Is tobacco going to have its scalp added to the belt of the prohibitionist beside that of the lamented but as yet not altogether late alcohol?" is the question asked by Garret Smith in an article in the current issue of Leslie's Magazine.

The writer reaches the conclusion that while there has been increased agitation and legislative activity on the subject of tobacco following the success of the drive for prohibition of liquor the efforts of reformers seeking to abolish tobacco have no general support. This opinion is based on the results of the questionnaires on the subject sent out to newspaper editors of the country by the Press Service Company of New York City.

The questions asked were:
 (1) Do you favor the enactment of laws prohibiting the personal use of tobacco by adults?

(2) In your judgment does the general sentiment of your community favor such legislation?

(3) Is the use of tobacco personally objectionable to you?

No arguments accompanied the questions and from their form it was impossible for any editor to determine the attitude of the questioners.

Out of 12,518 editors questioned, 7,847 replied according to the summary given. These editors, it is estimated, represent a combined circulation of 21,870,046. Of the 7,847 editors replying, 7,393, or 95 per cent, represent public sentiment in their communities as opposed to anti-tobacco legislation. Only 290 editors, or 3 per cent of those replying believed there was any considerable sentiment favorable to tobacco prohibition. There were 174, or 2 per cent, in doubt, while 20 failed to record their judgment.

Editors' Judgment Unbiased

"It is of special interest to note that 569 editors in answering the first question, personally favored such legislation, although only 260 of them reported that public opinion also favored the prohibition of tobacco—an indication of the conscientious effort made by the editors to distinguish public opinion from their own personal opinions," the article continues.

"The highest percentage of replies reporting public opinion favorable to prohibition of tobacco came from Utah, where 42 per cent of the editors thought the public were for such a movement. Utah is the only state which has since adopted an anti-cigarette law. The result was forecast by several of the editors who stated that the influence of the Mormon Church was against tobacco. The Mormon Church is also strong in Idaho, which is the other state where the use of tobacco was recently prohibited, but the governor has signed the bill just passed, in which the prohibitory legislation is repealed. In this state 89 per cent of the editors estimate sentiment in their communities as against tobacco prohibition, which, nevertheless, is 6 per cent below the average reported opposition.

"The legislature of Tennessee some weeks ago passed and the governor has signed a bill repealing the anti-cigarette law of that state. The questionnaire showed 93 per cent of its editors believed the public against anti-tobacco legislation. The legislature of Arkansas, has also passed a bill repealing its anti-cigarette law. In this state 94 per cent of the editors reported against tobacco prohibition.

Arizona's Practical Joke

"A bill, introduced in the current session of the legislature of Arizona to prohibit smoking in public dining rooms and other public places, was first amended to prohibit the consumption in public of peanuts, chewing gum, tea and coffee and then defeated by the senate. The questionnaire returns from that state were 92 per cent 'no.'

"In Iowa where the 'no's' were 95 per cent a bill to repeal the anti-cigarette law has been passed and signed by the governor.

"A bill to repeal the anti-cigarette law in Kansas, with 89 per cent 'no's,' is receiving the attention of its legislature. Last year a petition for a referendum in Oregon to prohibit the use of tobacco failed of sufficient signatures to bring the question to a vote, and 95 per cent of the editors declare their public against legislation. In Oklahoma an anti-cigarette bill has been reported unfavorably in the house. The editors of that state reported 94 per cent against its public support.

"Outside of Utah, where Mormon influence predominates," the article concludes, "the anti-tobacco movement appears, as in the case of Tennessee, Arkansas and Iowa, to be losing ground and is not to any considerable extent supported by the people."

The friends of tobacco feel particularly elated over this showing, inasmuch as 1920-21 was a maximum year in legislative circles with 42 state legislatures in session and the tobacco subject received an unusual amount of consideration.

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