

THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE—ITS PURPOSE AND POLICY

A Reply to Various Charges, Statements, Allegations and Inferences.

The last two editions of the Du Page County papers have contained numerous charges, statements and allegations against the honesty, sincerity and purpose of the Anti-Saloon League of Illinois, and by inference against its officials and employees.

In the interest of the public welfare these things demand a frank answer and a frank answer they shall receive.

Permit me to say before taking up the various statements against the League to which reference is made, that the Anti-Saloon League of Illinois (as of all the states of the Union) is controlled by a Board of Trustees representing practically all church denominations, who are elected by representative bodies of these denominations, including the Catholic Church or where ecclesiastical law prevents, election are selected in some other way. There are about one hundred members on the Illinois Board. The Trustees meet twice a year, outline the work, and shape the policy of the League. The Headquarters Committee, composed of nine members of the Board, direct the League work between the semi-annual meetings of the Trustees.

It can thus be seen that the League is not a self-perpetuating body, but is primarily "THE CHURCH IN ACTION AGAINST THE SALOON" and the beverage liquor traffic. It is absolutely non-partisan and non-sectarian, and its three lines of activity are: Agitation, Legislation, and Law Enforcement.

First—The statement is made in substance that with National Prohibition in the Constitution and the Volstead Act in operation, the enforcement of the law is now entirely in the hands of the National Government and that therefore there is no occasion for local or state governments to concern themselves in the matter of law enforcement.

The comparatively recent appeal of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue to Churches, Civic Bodies and

Good Citizens, to assist the officials in local communities everywhere, emphasizes with exceeding clearness the local obligation of the Anti-Saloon League.

The sharp criticisms of the League for "invading the local field of county politics" shows how unfamiliar our critics are with the history and work of this nation-wide organization.

From the very beginning of its history twenty-six years ago, the League has been "invading" local political units to drive the beverage liquor traffic and to back up local officials in the enforcement of the law. In the first years of its work "invaded" rural townships and villages; then rural communities; then the rural states and finally closed in upon the states with the big cities through the drive for the EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT and NATIONAL PROHIBITION.

It is the duty of village officials to enforce the prohibition law as much as any other law. If they are unable to cope with the criminal element then the Attorney General of the State, with his numerous assistants are paid good salaries to lend their aid. But only where the local and state governments break down should the National Government be called upon for help.

Major Dalrymple, the Chief Prohibition Law Enforcement Officer for Illinois and five other states of the middle west, recently said that it was never intended that the National Government should take full responsibility for the enforcement of the Prohibition law but only to supplement the work of the several states.

Second—The declaration is made that: "The action taken by the Anti-Saloon League in the recent election shows that organization to be a political machine." We accept the allegation and rejoice in the fact it includes. The Anti-Saloon League is a political machine but it is not a partisan machine. Politic, as defined by Webster is "the science of good government." For such politics the League stands and the individual citizen or organization or church that does not stand for that kind of politics, in our judgment, is not worthy to live under the flag.

Third—The inference that the ex-service men, as such, were discriminated against by the League in the endorsement of candidates in the recent primary, is absolutely without

any foundation whatsoever. And yet, as much as we honor and applaud the work of the ex-soldiers, we do not believe that service in the army or navy necessarily qualifies any soldier of any war for public office. Among the general principles which govern the League endorsements are the following: (a) The record of the candidates as a public official. (b) His fitness and efficiency from the dry standpoint. (c) The probable chance of the candidates election if endorsed.

When there are several dry candidates and no wet in the field the general policy of the League is to make no special endorsement at all.

Fourth—The Hinsdale Doings declares that the honest work of the Anti-Saloon League ended on July 1, 1919. This of course is the date when war prohibition went into effect.

The Prohibition law or any other is not enforced beyond the public sentiment back of the law. The Anti-Saloon League helps develop the public sentiment which secures the law and maintains the sentiment which makes certain its enforcement.

"The honest work" of the League will perhaps be ended when the Ex-Saloon Keepers and their friends cease to become criminals and become law-abiding citizens but not till then.

There is not an Ex-Saloon Keeper, distiller, brewer, bum, plugugly cheap-skate or keeper of a red-light resort, but would rejoice to have the Anti-Saloon League put out of business today.

Fifth—The assertion is made that "it is almost time that this organization (The Anti-Saloon League) was thrown out of our churches and our (Continued on Page 3)

**G. H. BUNGE
Lawyer**

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