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# GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

Should Liquor Talk?  
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Part 4

Government's master motive should be the establishment of justice and the preservation of the citizens' rights. Government's inevitable tragedy is that convention is accepted for justice and expediency for rights. When this comes to pass, no matter what the name, where the location, what the creed, or how brilliant the society, civilization declines.

As the laws which govern the single cell govern the entire organism, so the laws which hurt a single citizen must injure the community.

Then in inquiring into the liquor question we go further than the effect of intoxicants upon the nervous system, the digestive system, the metabolic system of the individual, we must consider the effect of intoxicants upon the social system as a whole.

We have repeatedly considered the evils of intemperance, and clapped down repressive laws while all the while we ignore the causes of intemperance. If our legislators would really stop intemperance they must go back to the laws which for years have made the people of one nation drunkards while the sister nation is composed of temperate people. For it is in the making and enforcement of laws that we find the origin of individual debauchery and public corruption. Then let us not be hasty in the enactment of laws which for expediency and the moment may yield a revenue, but must inevitably beget an evil.

Drink is a part of society. The higher the society the greater variety of drinks that are concocted for the pleasure of men. The abuse of drink is part of the intemperance that results in the abuse of natural or social rights.

Granted there are individual inebriates. But the abuse of intoxicants on a broad social scale is synchronous with intemperance in all other social relations. To plug the dike of alcoholic intemperance has been to allow the North Sea of social intemperances to go unchecked. Sociologists have long recognized that intemperance whether in gambling, sex, or liquor is directly proportionate to inequality in wealth. The great gamblers are the very poor who have nothing to lose and everything to gain, and the very rich, who, surfeited with wealth, become bored with life and go from extravagance to extravagance in a vain effort to find life's pleasures.

As society progresses, as mankind is separated more and more into the house of plenty and the house of want, as the middle class is swept away and woman, the mother, the homemaker must work, we find the race track, the numbers games, the bingo parties drawing ever larger and larger crowds. It is the same decline that marked the decline of the stalwart games of Rome to give way to the gladiatorial combats and orgies of the arena that may be found today in the growing intemperance of our people.

As the middle class disappears, the temperate—the balance element in society—is carried away and intemperance in all forms appears. As with gambling and sex, so with liquor. The types who abuse the one abuse the others. As the horse race is a vicarious outlet for an expectancy return so the rum bottle is an outlet for the disillusioned, and no amount of Blue Laws or repressive legislation will stop this sociological drive. And it is a wise legislature that considers causes rather than effects.

While we cannot in one legislature, nor even in one lifetime alter the laws which bring about intemperance, we can occasionally stick on a patch on the old pair of britches and hope that it will hold until a better pair is made. At present, through the purchase of licenses, it is permissible for clubs to sell their members liquors by bottle as well as across the counter.

This means that with our curfew law a member may stow away as

much as possible before the deadline and then, when no longer capable of lucid judgment, he has the facilities at hand to take along more bottled merriment for outside enjoyment. If our legislators would preclude drinking places from selling packaged liquor they would to a small degree make liquor less accessible to those who already have had enough.

If our legislators would lessen drunkenness, as much as such superficial remedies may lessen it, they would do well to consult the policemen and get first hand the story of the malevolent effect of our curfew laws and the disposal of bottled liquor to the already inebriated. Until we consult more fully the effects of our laws with those whose duty it is to enforce the laws there is little hope that many of the statutes we so thoughtlessly pass will do more than lessen the aggravation.