

intoxicating drinks. Hence the prohibitionists have opposed the application of the Initiative and Referendum to the Constitution from the first. They tried again and again to get an Initiative and Referendum amendment similar to that of Maine that would allow the Initiative and Referendum only for statutes, but the liquor element fought for its application to the Constitution.

The liquor element of North Dakota has really been the agitator for the Initiative and Referendum, hoping to use it to force re-submission of the prohibitory amendment.

The prohibitionists have heretofore succeeded in defeating every amendment that would apply the Initiative and Referendum to the Constitution. I presume the liquor element has at last compromised on the present amendment, believing that it can get the 25 per cent petition necessary to re-submission.

I have no doubt it can. It has the money. If it succeeds the prohibitionists will find that they have cut off their noses to spite their faces. They had better have made the percentage 10 instead of 25.

Under the Initiative and Referendum for statutes they can get all the legislation that the people will stand for, but the 25 per cent may be a preventive of the submission of woman suffrage for many years. The woman suffrage vote this year was only about 25 per cent of the total. Still I would not be surprised to see them get a 25 per cent petition inside of two years, if the legislature refuses to act. I surely hope to.

It is a mistake to make the percentage for petitions too small, as the submission of too many propositions at once tends to the defeat of many meritorious measures at the polls. When in doubt voters, vote NO.

I lived in North Dakota from 1905 to 1909, and wrote articles for the Initiative and Referendum for local and city papers while there. I have been a believer in prohibition all my life, but I was disgusted with the action of the prohibitionists in North Dakota. I believe that the Initiative and Referendum is the true solution of that question.

HENRY HEATON.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

WHY ALCOHOL REMAINS A MONOPOLY.

Detroit, Mich., Dec. 8, 1914.

Referring to the issue of December 4, page 1157, "Mischievous Philanthropy." Much was expected from the denatured alcohol law. I attended the hearings preceding the enactment of the law, with credentials from the Michigan State Grange and the Detroit Board of Commerce. I opposed the sections that, in spite of much opposition, finally prevailed; that had the effect, as was predicted, to confine the manufacture of denatured alcohol to the large distilleries. This section by its terms prohibits distillation by farmers. The Agricultural Department at Washington now has, or did have, a fractional still, the cheapest in cost that could be used and comply with the law, on exhibition. Its cost is upwards of five thousand dollars, and even if the farmer could

handle such a complicated machine the petty amount of alcohol he is permitted to distill daily would not pay the interest and depreciation on the investment in the still, to say nothing of his time and material.

I had at the hearing the report of the English Parliamentary Committee, headed by Austin Chamberlain, made after an investigation of farmers' alcohol stills in Germany. These and other practical exhibits, from the farmers' standpoint, were submitted, but any argument that favored the farmer as a distiller met with violent opposition from attorneys representing special interests.

The government's experience in "controlling the collection of excise duties" does not indicate any difficulties at all would result if farmers were given this privilege. Those manufacturers in my line of business have in their laboratories cheap, worm stills, easy to manipulate and costing but a few dollars each. A record is made of their size, description, etc., in the local internal revenue collector's office, nothing is ever heard of these still owners and of other still owners violating the law or using the still illicitly, although we all have ample opportunity for so doing.

The same illustration also is seen in making cigars. Small villages and even rural districts without villages have little places where cigars are manufactured, but the law is not violated. There would be no difficulty should farmers be given the right to utilize the material they grow to its best advantage. If they had permission they could without the employment of skilled help or extra help, mash their fodder of low feeding value, like corn stalks, distill alcohol and get at least as much food value from the stalks to feed their live stock, for it would be in a feedable condition. The distillate would be a low percentage of alcohol, probably never over 10 to 12 per cent. This, however, could be drawn to central distilleries and rectified and denatured into fuel alcohol. The farmer cannot draw his low grade fodder to a central distillery because of the cost, but he could procure his fuel in this manner, and would become a dangerous competitor to the corporations who control liquid fuel, gasoline and denatured alcohol, for there is no limit to the alcohol that could be produced in this manner, excepting the demand.

F. F. INGRAM.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, December 15, 1914.

Departmental Reports.

In his report to Congress on December 8 Secretary of Commerce Redfield tells of investigation of commercial conditions in the United States. A survey of the pottery industry in the United States has just been completed, in the course of