“U. S. Dry Within Ten Years”

So Say Prohibitionists After Webb-Kenyon Decision
Liquor Dealers Say It Will React in Their Favor

THIS means the beginning of real prohibition, which has never existed up to the present time. There will be no more permits to sell or to ship liquor during the present year than during any year of the past, and Congress will certainly submit the national prohibition amendment to the country by the turn of the year. The United States will be "dry" within ten years.

"It means that many States now 'dry' are going 'wet' within five years, and it is the greatest check that possibly could be administered to the national prohibition movement."2

These conflicting interpretations of the significance of the action of the Supreme Court of the United States in declaring the Webb-Kenyon law to be constitutional were both expressed by persons who have been actively engaged in the prohibition fight. They have been on different sides, however.

The first opinion was expressed by William H. Anderson, head of the Anti-Saloon League in this State; the second by A. L. Strasburg, counsel for the Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association. And both presented quite plausible arguments to support their opinions.

Having seen the effects of the decision which was handed down last Monday. The Prohibitionists throughout the country were elated at the upholding of the Webb-Kenyon law, and were unanimous in considering it a victory for prohibition; while the lawyers representing the liquor interests appeared to be the only ones that smiled upon the prospects of the liquor men in the legal phraseology of the Court's final decision. The law was fought for fourteen years by the liquor interests. Representatives of some of the mail-order liquor houses have sprung into existence as if by magic as prohibition has swept over the country. They have been released from a state of deep dejection by receipt of the news. At a convention of this particular branch of the liquor business in Louisville, Ky., last summer, one of the members of the Mail Order Liquor Dealers' Association said in a pessimistic address on the subject that he knew no wall-order houses that would go out of business altogether if the Webb-Kenyon law were declared unconstitutional.

In some quarters there has been a popular misunderstanding that the Webb-Kenyon law will prevent shipments of liquor from "wet" to "dry" States. It doesn't. It provides that no liquor at all shall be shipped into a State "in violation of the law of the State concerned."

The twenty-three States have been voted "dry" but there are many comparative degrees of dryness in the prohibition fight, and some of these twenty-three are very moist. Only three of them are classified by the Prohibitionists as "bone dry." Those are West Virginia, which established the "bone dry" precedent in 1913 and appointed a "Commissioner of prohibition" who has ever since been kept very busy by bootleggers on one side and legal fights over constitutionality of the law on the other.

The Black Sections show the "wet" area in the United States.

Among the twenty-three States which have adopted prohibition laws make up twenty-five percent of the four which went "dry" at the last election in November: Michigan, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana. In these States the liquor interests were losing a few months to about two years to wind up their affairs and vanish. The law is scheduled to become effective in Michigan on May 1, 1918; in Nebraska, May 1, 1917; South Dakota, July 1, 1917; and Montana, in January of 1918. The Prohibitionists are now planning vigorous fights in these four States to have strict legislation passed after West Virginia's passed to make the States "bone dry." They are also confident that the State of Washington, now "dry" by a vote of the people for personal use, will go "bone dry" in the near future. This was one of the States in which the liquor interests had previously declared rigid laws against receiving shipments of unconstitutional liquors.

Kansas, clauséd as one of the extra dry States because liquor may not be sold there at present except for medicinal purposes, has not adopted advance anti-shipment legislation in anticipation of the Webb-Kenyon act, as some other States have done, according to Rev. St. O. Everhardt, editor of The American Legionist, official organ of the Prohibitionists, but is expected to take prompt advantage of that law now. The same is the case in Colorado, another of the all-white States in the latest map of the Prohibitionists, which is reproduced here.

In the District of Columbia was voted "dry" by Congress the day after the Supreme Court upheld the Webb-Kenyon law. An anti-shipment feature embodied in a Senate amendment to the bill was defeated, but the Prohibitionists declare that they will get this through soon. The new law for the District is to become effective on Nov. 1 of this year. The Prohibitionists interpreted the fact that the District was voted dry just one day after the Supreme Court's decision as the first evidence of the psychological effect which the Court decision is expected to have on the country.

The conflicting opinions as to the constitutionality of these laws have made the laws ineffectual, and as a result no State has been able to really rid itself of the liquor evil. That phase of the fight ended last Monday, and now for the first time in the country's history real prohibition is to have a chance."
their voting residence elsewhere and that as there were no registration records in the District, persons living there permanently being without a vote, it would be permissible by ballot in all the Districts from Virginia that might be needed to defeat the bill, and nobody could prove they hadn't lived in the District for decades. There are Machiavellis on both sides.

Texas is listed by the Anti-Saloon Year Book as a "near prohibition State." Like many of the other States, it has counties and towns that are dry. Its present status from the Statewide point of view is this: The question of the prohibition, or the last election has been defeated because of this, and a prohibition candidate was elected.

Virginia, where prohibition became effective only last year, is among the States that the campaigners expect to pass more stringent anti-shipment laws. In Virginia individuals may receive a quart of liquor a month. Many of the quarts received in the names of infants and the names of furniture dogs, are said to have been passed over the line into West Virginia.

The ancient families of the Old Dominion, however, have not been very well pleased with the quality of liquor that they have received through sending mail orders to the group of "dry State liquor houses" in Maryland and other bordering States, the league members have been informed, and so the league hopes that this family pride will dispose altogether with such poor substitutes on the theory that no whisky at all could hardly be worse than the brand of liquor that these concerns of mushroom growth have been shipped into the State. West Virginia also procured much liquor from Kentucky while the constitutionality of the stringent laws was under contention, and one railroad from Kentucky was obliged to put on a special train for the daily "suitcase brigade" that crossed the line carrying heavy handbags that grew lighter during the progress of the railroad journey, to the discomfiture of other passengers.

Even more flagrant than the violations in West Virginia, however, have been the violations of the prohibition laws in Maine, according to the Prohibitionists. There it is said that some hotels have openly conducted parties and have been connived at by the authorities. Maine was the first State of the country to go dry, its prohibition law being enacted in the early fifties, and, like most of the other States that adopted prohibition early, it failed to make any restrictions as to individual shipments, leaving any individual to import a carload a day if he desired. It also allowed the sale of liquor for medicinal, sacramental, or manufacturing purposes.

Of course, spirits must be allowed for sacramental purposes," Mr. Anderson said, "but in Maine, as in many other places, these three legal reasons for purchasing liquor have been overworked. A man who intends to build a barn asks for liquor for 'manufacturing purposes,' and a man who has at some time in his career had a cold in the head must have it for medicinal purposes."

Mr. Anderson said that despite these flaws in the working out of the laws, prohibition was proving effective in that young men, accustomed to drinking, no longer found public saloons inviting them on every street, and he believed the Webb-Kenyon act would speedily put an end to most of the present abuses of the law.

"While its greatest immediate effect will be exerted on only a few States, it will indirectly affect every prohibition district," he said.

The Prohibitionists have been commenting rather caustically on former President Taft's veto of the Webb-Kenyon bill as unconstitutional since the Supreme Court's decision on it.

"Do you realize how much prohibition territory there is in this country at present? Few persons do. Altogether there are exactly 2,543 counties in all of the States of the Union. Of these, all but 335 are now dry, and some of the 335 are partially dry."

The Prohibitionists have been commenting rather caustically on former President Taft's veto of the Webb-Kenyon bill as unconstitutional since the Supreme Court's decision on it.

The question of what persons formerly in the liquor business will do, in the event that the Prohibitionists' present plans for finishing their work in ten years are carried out, has commanded considerable attention lately, particularly among the liquor men themselves. The prohibition law is said to have closed 1,100 saloons in the State of Washington, and to have put twenty-four breweries and one distilling plant out of business there. A great many of the saloons have since reopened as soda water fountains and candy stores. They have retained their former general appearance, as a consequence of which many in Seattle have been experiencing the thrill of putting one foot on the brass railing while having soft drinks served.

One of the former brewers of Washington is said to be turning out a million gallons of apple juice a year now, while a Colorado ex-brewery manufacturer near-beer and fancy China plate. The biggest brewery in Wheeling, W. Va., was converted into a packing plant and, according to its proprietor, is now employed to the hilt in Germany a little more than 29 gallons.

In New York State, where they have local option and can decide for themselves whether they will be "dry" or "wet." The Anti-Saloon League hopes to have a bill passed by the present Legislature, called the "Optional Prohibition Remonstrance bill," to extend local option to cities of the first class and enable different districts of those cities to vote on the proposition. The purpose is to make it possible for residential districts to go "dry" whether the rest of the city remains "wet" or not.

The Prohibitionists' next big fight is to get Congress to submit a national prohibition amendment to the country. In the meantime, however, they expect to fight for a bill in the present Congress to prohibit the sending of liquor circulars and advertisements by mail order houses to any persons other than liquor dealers. This, they believe, would put a very serious crimp in the huge mail-order business, as individuals in States that go "dry" are now circularized as soon as the election determining the State's status is over. Of the prospects of the national amendment Superintendent Anderson's opinion is this: "If it does not go through at this session of Congress it will certainly go through before 1920, for political reasons. While there may not be two-thirds of the Congressmen in favor of prohibition, there will be two-thirds of them in favor of getting the thing out of the way before the next Presidential election, to prevent the possibility of getting a question that might be considered in this way. And when the proposition once gets to the country itself, the country will go dry as a bone."