



Belief in Miracles as an Issue in Minnesota Election; Congressman Volstead, Dry Leader, Accused of Atheism

Preacher Opponent, Who Made the Charge and Won Primary, Debarred in Lower Court

PROHIBITIONISTS have always drawn their main strength from the Church, and now prohibition in America comes down concretely to the parable of the Loaves and the Fishes, for it is on that parable that the return of Congressman Volstead, author of the Volstead act, to Congress hinges.

Mr. Volstead was defeated in the Minnesota primaries in June for the Republican nomination to Congress from the 7th Minnesota Congressional District. His victorious opponent was the Rev. O. J. Qvale, who claims to be even drier than Mr. Volstead. Thus, on the surface, prohibition would win either way, but it wouldn't, for if Mr. Volstead does not go back to Congress the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee will be a wet, and the wets are prepared to bet two to one that in that case there will be a new enforcement act to replace the Volstead act and that the new act will permit a good deal more than one-half of 1 per cent of alcohol in a drink.

How the Miracle Figures

Here enters the parable of the Loaves and the Fishes. Says the parable:

"And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick.

"And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This here is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.

"But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

"And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

"He said, Bring them hither to me.

"And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

"And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full.

"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside men and women."

The question is, Does Mr. Volstead believe in this miracle and can he prove his belief to the satisfaction of the Minnesota Supreme Court? If he can, the Rev. Mr. Qvale's name will come off the ballot in November as the Republican nominee for Con-

gress for the 7th Minnesota District, and Mr. Volstead—the defeated aspirant—name will go on the ballot.

Court Finds for Volstead

The point is that in the course of the primary campaign the Rev. Mr. Qvale charged Mr. Volstead with being an atheist on account of not believing in the parable of the Loaves and the Fishes. Immediately on the result of the primary being announced, Mr. Volstead charged Mr. Qvale with violating the Minnesota Corrupt Practices Act in bringing a charge of atheism which Mr. Volstead says is false, and, hence, being disqualified for the nomination. A Circuit Court judge has already decided in Mr. Volstead's favor and the case has been appealed to the State Supreme Court.

The Rev. O. J. Qvale is a village preacher and a convert to the political faith of the Nonpartisan League. His victory over Congressman Volstead in the Republican primary was an anomaly in politics in itself. A bitter enemy of the saloon, the Rev. Mr. Qvale was nominated by the votes of those who favor a return to the good old days of wine and liquor, not because the wets hated Qvale less, but because they hated Volstead more.

During the campaign, a bitter one while it lasted, Mr. Qvale attacked the saloon in every campaign speech. The wets smiled over his tongue-lashings, and mailed contributions to his campaign fund.

Couldn't Offend Wets

Mr. Qvale promptly returned the checks. The wets grinned, and wherever he spoke they packed the hall and led in the applause. They took the discarded money and conducted a Qvale campaign of their own, quietly but effectively. When primary day came they voted for him to a man. As the preacher was running on the Nonpartisan League ticket, which brought him thousands of farmer votes, and backed as he was by the churchpeople, the wet vote turned the tide for him. He was nominated by a large majority.

The wets rejoiced, here in Minnesota and everywhere where the Volstead act had helped bury John Barleycorn. The San Francisco convention—the wet part of it—reveled in the news.

The dries of the nation were as much concerned over the defeat of their champion in the House as the wets were elated, and the telegraph instruments in the little city of Granite Falls, where Congressman Volstead lives when he is not in Washington, broke all records during the week following the primary. They clicked constantly over telegrams offering support after it was



IF CONGRESSMAN VOLSTEAD can prove he believes the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes wherein Christ fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes he may return to Congress.

known the Congressman was defeated. He was urged by thousands, from Portland, Me., to its namesake on the Pacific Coast, to become an independent candidate in November.

But Congressman Volstead, aside from being a dry, has been through many hard-fought campaigns. He had another card up his political sleeve.

During the campaign a circular, admittedly signed and indorsed by the Rev. Mr. Qvale, had been sent into the district, in which it was charged, among other things, that Congressman Volstead was an atheist. Hardly had the votes been counted when attorneys were hur-



THE Rev. O. J. Qvale, who accused Congressman Volstead of being an atheist and defeated him for the nomination.

riedly scanning the circular and studying the corrupt practices act. That law especially provides that any person who secures a nomination or election to an office by fraud shall be held disqualified to hold such office, if elected, or to run for the election, if nominated.

Charged Fraud

A case was brought in the 7th District Circuit Court, in which it was alleged that the Rev. Mr. Qvale had secured the Congressional nomination by fraud. It was alleged that he had "willfully, maliciously and with intent to defraud the said Andrew J. Volstead out of the Republican nomination for Congress in the 7th Minnesota Congressional District," violated the corrupt practices act of the state of Minnesota in accusing the said Andrew J. Volstead of being an atheist.

It was stated that the 7th Congressional District is a community in which the religious spirit and respect for religion and the teachings of God has a strong hold upon the people, and that the circulation of campaign material derogatory to the religious belief of a candidate was fraud. This was held to be a direct and plain violation of the corrupt practices act, which would disqualify the preacher candidate unless it could be proved in court that Congressman Volstead,

of the case," he said, "and I have no doubt of the guilt of Mr. Qvale, provided his statements concerning the religious beliefs of Mr. Volstead can be proved false. The demurrer is dismissed. Proceed with the case." Counsel for the plaintiff at once called Congressman Volstead to the stand.

"Are you an atheist?" he was asked.

"Absolutely not," was the answer. "There never was a time when such a charge could be made against me."

"Do you believe in Christianity and the Bible, Mr. Volstead?"

"I do, and have always done so."

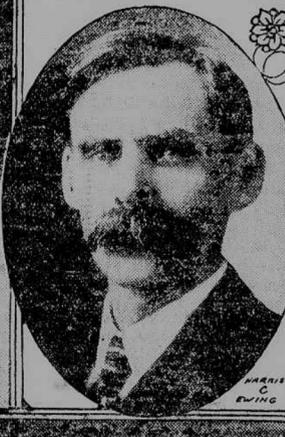
"Are you a member of any church?"

"I attend the Congregational Church."

This is a Lutheran community and Congressman Volstead is a Scandinavian. The answer drew smiles from the Qvale adherents.

"Why are you a member of that denomination?" the Congressman's attorney asked.

"I was confirmed in the Lutheran Church when a boy, in Goodhue County," said the Congressman. "I married a Scotch girl, and then



CONGRESSMAN VOLSTEAD, shown above, author of the prohibition enforcement act, swore he believed in the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, but when he was asked if he believed in that miracle at Cana when Christ turned the water into wine, the prohibition leader was excused from answering.

his leading opponent, was in reality an atheist. The burden of proof was placed upon Mr. Qvale.

At first the friends of Mr. Qvale—wets as well as dries—laughed at the charge. The complaint further quoted the speeches of the Rev. Mr. Qvale, and in one of the extracts he was made to say that his opponent publicly sneered at the teachings of the Bible.

The case plainly was not one to be tried by a local judge. Feeling ran high—and most of it was in favor of the preacher candidate—and Governor J. A. A. Burnquist named Judge Albert Johnson, of Red Wing, to hear the case.

Prove It, Said the Judge

The little courtroom in Benson was crowded when the court opened. The first step of the defense was a demurrer. Judge Johnson overruled the motion.

The Rev. O. J. Qvale, Although a Strong Dry, Had Support of the Saloon Interests

edge, been conducted as a Christian home?"

"Always. My father is a good man. He is not against the Church."

"Did you ever hear him say that he did not believe in the Bible?"

"Never. He always told me, when I asked questions about passages in the Bible which I could not understand, that God performed miracles to spread His teachings."

"Did he ever tell you about the wedding where the water was turned to wine?" demanded the attorney for the defense.

"Irrelevant"—began the attorney for the Congressman, when Judge Johnson stopped him.

"That miracle is not mentioned in this case," said the court.

There was no further cross-examination.

H. S. Lampson and H. J. Debermeyer, both trustees of the Granite Falls Congregational Church, testified to Congressman Volstead's Christian character.

The attorneys for the Congressman rested their case—on the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Crowd for Qvale

The Rev. Mr. Qvale was called to the stand. Before he could proceed Judge Johnson was obliged to threaten to clear the courtroom to preserve order. The demonstration among the spectators was strongly in favor of the clergyman.

"Are you the regularly nominated Republican candidate for Congress in the 7th Minnesota District?" asked Attorney Manahan.

"I am."

"How did you become such candidate?"

"I was nominated at the primary election in June, 1920."

"In that primary election who was your principal opponent?"

"Congressman Andrew J. Volstead."

"And you defeated him?"

"I did."

"What was your majority?"

"I received a majority over Congressman Volstead, my leading opponent, of 3,000 votes."

"Did you ever violate, in your knowledge, the corrupt practices act which governs primary elections in the State of Minnesota?"

"I have not."

"You went through a bitter and hard-fought campaign?"

"I did. My opponents made many unfair attacks upon me."

"To your knowledge, did you ever make a charge against your opponent, Andrew J. Volstead, which you did not believe could be substantiated?"

"I did not."

Authorship Admitted

The attorneys for Congressman Volstead took the witness for cross-examination.

"You are the author of this circular, are you not?" asked the attorney, handing the witness a copy of the pamphlet used in the campaign.

"I helped prepare it. In fact, I wrote it."

"It is true, is it not, that this circular alleges in so many words and by inference that Congressman Volstead, your opponent in the primary election, is not a Christian; in fact, is an atheist?"

"It charges him with being an atheist."

"Do you and did you believe that charge and did you have any evidence to substantiate that charge when you circulated it in this Christian community?"

"The statement was based upon a sneering allusion I had heard of, in which Congressman Volstead ridiculed the miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes. In my opinion, a man who will do that is not a Christian."

"Had you any other ground for charging Congressman Volstead with atheism?"

"I was told that he had called me a vile name. No Christian would use such language in speaking of a minister of the church."

"And upon this hearsay you stooped to slander?"

"I do not believe my statements

were slanderous, because I believed them to be true. In my opinion, the word atheism carries no approbrium."

Smarting under the rapid fire of caustic questions, the minister made several dramatic appeals to the court for justice.

The Rev. G. T. Lee, of Minneapolis, was called by the defense.

He was asked if he had told Mr. Qvale that Congressman Volstead "had no religion."

His testimony was ruled out.

J. A. Lee, of Benson, offered the same testimony. He shared the same fate.

Judge Johnson gave both sides time to present written arguments. He listened to appeals by counsel, took the case under advisement and made an early decision, holding that Congressman Volstead was entitled to the nomination on the ground that the preacher candidate had violated the corrupt practices act. The next step in the case will be appeal to the Supreme Court.

The case may drag along until the election in November and keep both candidates off the ballot. In that case the preacher candidate, who hates the saloon but was supported by the wets, will lose, but the wets will win, for a wet will be the ranking member of that important committee of the House.

In rendering his decision Judge Johnson said:

"Such charges made in a Christian and God-fearing community like the 7th District by a minister of the Gospel, whose word could well be taken as true under ordinary circumstances, would lead to disaster and defeat of the opposing candidate. Beyond any question the offense against the corrupt practices act, herein disclosed, was a most deliberate, serious and material infraction of the law."

Career of Mr Qvale

If the Rev. Mr. Qvale is winner in this strange election contest—and his friends and opponents agree that proving Congressman Volstead an atheist will have much to do with it—Congress will have a new member, who is fifty-one years of age, the son of a farmer. He was born on a farm near Decorah, Iowa, received an elementary education in a rural school, entered Luther College at Decorah, was graduated in 1890, and completed his training for the ministry at Luther Seminary in 1893. Later he took post-graduate work at the University of Chicago.

For twenty-three years he served a congregation at Orfordville, Wis. In 1917 he was called to his present charge in Benson. He is serving on the board of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

The Rev. Mr. Qvale has seven children, three of them young men. Two sons served through the World War. The other was rejected for physical disability.

That is the kind of man who is charged with violating the corrupt practices act at a primary election; in other words, stooping to corruption in order to win a seat in Congress.

Something New in Politics

It is something new under the sun, after all. Men have been accused of corrupting elections by the use of money. Never before has a minister of the Gospel been called upon to defend a political nomination by proving in court that his defeated opponent is an atheist.

Congressman Volstead, the hope of the dries, is accused of being a man with "no religion." One might think the saloon men would be on his side. But they are not.

Since the primary the preacher nominee made the following statement:

"My record is as dry as Mr. Volstead's, with a little to spare."

He stands on that, and the wets will vote for him.

They care little either way about the loaves and fishes.

And if Congressman Volstead wins in court the dries—those who believe literally, as Congressman Volstead says he does, in the story of the miraculous feeding of the multitude—will have it as a sign that the day of miracles is not past. For their champion was beaten, and he has a chance. The most important committee of the House was wet, and it may be dry.

Bins Full, Wheat Farmer Is Poor

THE tragedy of the Kansas wheat farmer is going to be an important title to the chapter of Kansas history as it will be written in the future. For the financial condition of the farmer is a real tragedy just now. He has a wheat crop worth \$300,000,000. He has nearly a hundred million dollars' worth of old wheat still in his bins or in the elevators. The millers and elevators and exporters would like to get hold of this wheat and pay real money for it at the rate of \$2.40 to \$2.50 a bushel cash in hand. But the farmer has the wheat and the buyer has the money, and both must keep it because the railroads cannot haul the wheat to market when the seller and buyer can meet on common ground and exchange the produce for real money.

Every one who draws a regular salary and many business men cannot realize the poignancy of the situation to the farmer and his family arising from this condition. Most business men take the car shortage and bad service as a matter of course and calculate upon it in all transactions. But the wheat farmer, whose chief income is wrapped up in that field of wheat, cannot and does not do this. He is deep in debt. Many farmers still have their 1919 crop in the bins, with three or four

chattel mortgages plastered on it for last year's harvest, last winter's clothes and food and fuel, and sometimes feed for the stock. And they have this year's crop in the shock or stack, and it is plastered with a chattel mortgage to pay the harvest bill and thrashers.

For years the banks in the wheat district have lent money on wheat. The loans were all for short time and usually contained the provision that if the wheat was thrashed and sold before the notes were due that payment should be made at once.

The custom has been that when the wheat was sold the farmer would pay off the notes at the bank, make a payment on the farm mortgage, give the wife a chunk of the money to buy herself some luxuries and home conveniences, buy all the children new fall outfits of clothes.

Since 1919 little if any of these things have happened, all because of the car shortage. The government crop statisticians estimated that on July 1 Kansas farmers still had 11,000,000 bushels of the 1919 crop in their bins. In some instances it is still in the stacks. They also estimate that between twenty and twenty-five million bushels of old wheat is still in the elevators and mills of the state. The farmer cannot get the money for his wheat in

an elevator until it is sold, because the Federal Reserve banks will not rediscount wheat paper because it is feared the wheat is being held in elevators for speculative purposes.

The railroad reports of the Kansas roads show that during July this year the wheat loadings have been only 42 per cent of the loadings of the same weeks a year ago. The roads simply do not have the cars to furnish for wheat loading. The Santa Fe, Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific have sufficient motive power to move additional traffic if they had the cars. The Rock Island, Frisco and Katy could not move any more freight than at present because of a shortage of power. Governor Allen has required all car repair men to extend their working day to nine hours in order to repair grain cars and get them in shape for handling the wheat as rapidly as possible. The Santa Fe carmen have agreed to this and are working nine hours each day.

The Kansas wheat crop is 40 per cent larger this year than last, but the wheat movement is only a little over 40 per cent as large this year as in 1919, so the grief of the railroad men is greater and the tragedy to the farmer and his family much more poignant this year than ever before.