

Lying For the Pennant

The contest for the 1909 pennant for champion long distance liar of Illinois is well under way, and the fellows who furnish items for the press in behalf of the liquor crowd are away ahead of anybody else. It now looks as if the editor of the Beacon, a whisky paper published at Belleville, Ill., has gained such a lead over the rest of them that he will hardly be overtaken.

The Beacon's specialty is the publication of articles relating to the results of the anti-saloon policy in Illinois cities and villages which have adopted the provisions of the new local option law. Early in January, the Beacon published a characteristic screed concerning conditions in Effingham. It is not the purpose of the Illinois Issue to keep contradicting these absurd stories, but occasionally we feel impelled to call attention to the facts just to keep our friends from being at all disturbed over these items.

Nothing to It

Effingham is all right. The business men of the town unite in testifying to the great improvement that has followed the abolition of the saloon. Lumber dealers and contractors say there has been more building since the saloons were voted out than ever before in the history of the city. Merchants, almost without exception, report a better trade and more cash business. A leading attorney of that city, whose integrity would not be questioned where he is known, declares that the value of his own residence property has advanced fully \$1,000 since the saloons were abolished. There are ten lawyers in Effingham, and nine of them are anti-saloon men. Physicians report better collections from their patients, and so on through all lines of business and professional life.

Saloons Made It So

The Beacon bears down heavily on the financial condition of the city. The present financial condition of Effingham, as everybody knows who is at all familiar with the facts, is very largely due to an indebtedness bequeathed to the dry administration by the saloon crowd that was in control before. Notwithstanding a saloon revenue of five or six thousand dollars a year, a heavy debt was accumulated, which of course it will take some time to pay off. If the people of Effingham adhere to their present policy this indebtedness will be wiped out in due time, and the city will be on a much better financial basis than ever before.

It seems almost superfluous to speak of the numerous cases where drinking men, heads of families, are now making better provision for those dependent on them than they did in the days of the open saloon. When the saloons are voted out of Teutopolis, a neighboring village, there will be a still better showing in Effingham.

The liquor men are spending thousands of dollars every week to secure the publication of just such rot as this, and when the people learn the facts, as they are bound to do, sooner or later, it will make the progress of the Anti-Saloon movement all the more rapid.

They Are Bushwackers

The venomous character of the liquor business has recently had a good illustration in the city of Champaign. The Rev. S. E. Fisher, pastor of the University Place Christian Church, has taken a very active part in all the fights against the saloon in Champaign and Urbana, and has secured much evidence for use in the prosecution of illicit liquor sellers. Mr. Fisher is now a member of the law enforcement committee of the Law and Order League of Champaign.

A Prohibitionist candidate for the legislature, Mr. Vennum, issued a paper during the campaign, and Mr. Fisher was a member of the committee on literature of the Prohibition party. Mr. Vennum's paper published a paragraph making rather plain allusion to the corruptibility of "a few aldermen." There was nothing whatever to connect Mr. Fisher with the publication of this article, and Mr. Vennum himself testified that no member of the committee was responsible for any utterance of the paper, but notwithstanding this, Mr. Fisher was singled out as the target of the liquor crowd and his indictment by the grand jury was secured.

Mr. Fisher appeared in court when he heard that he was charged with criminal libel and promptly gave bond for his appearance for trial. Mr. F. K. Robeson, a leading merchant of Champaign, and Mr. S. W. Love, mayor of Urbana, signed his bond. The citizens of Champaign and Urbana look upon this as a case of persecution pure and simple, and the people of those two cities are standing back of Mr. Fisher and will see him through the fight. Three members of the grand jury have sent word to Mr. Fisher that the whole matter was a farce and one of them said there was not a single bit of evidence warranting the indictment.

Gilmore and the Buzz Saw

The liquor press agents some time ago got an item started on its rounds in the newspapers to the effect that Tom Gilmore, the chief bugler for the distillers, and president of the Model License League, had challenged Superintendent Baker of the Anti-Saloon League of America to a joint debate.

The item caught Dr. Baker's eye and he promptly sent Mr. Gilmore this letter:

Colonel T. M. Gilmore, President Model License League, Louisville, Ky.

My Dear Mr. Gilmore: I see by the press dispatches that you have challenged me to a joint debate before a meeting of your Model License League, to be held in Louisville, January 21-23. I must beg to be excused from accepting your challenge, as I cannot afford to stop in the midst of a winning fight to discuss the kind of implements to be used in the further execution of the liquor traffic.

The Anti-Saloon League was permitted to lead the fighting that put out of existence above fifteen thousand saloons last year, and we are very busy in an effort to make it twenty thousand this year. Did you hear the pistol shot that killed Senator Carmack go crashing through the heart of the liquor traffic in Tennessee the other day?

It was kind of you, Colonel, to promise me immunity from the alleged charges of one C. R. Mabee, who never had employment with the Anti-Saloon League, and U. G. Robinson who had, but has not, for reasons which I leave you and him to explain, if I would attend your meeting; but I cannot possibly attend, as the King's business requires haste.

Very truly,

P. A. Baker,
Gen. Supt. Anti-Saloon League of America.