

## Rockford Redeems Itself

The city of Rockford has refused to be made a horrible example of the failure of prohibition. On the other hand, it is making a success of prohibition, and has recently managed to get the lid fastened down so tight that even Mayor Rose would hardly have the nerve to assert that a single blind pig dares to show its head in the beautiful capital of Winnebago County.

For some time past the efforts of the brewers and distillers and wholesale liquor dealers to break down the local option law in Rockford, the most important city in Illinois where it is being tried, appeared to be attended with considerable success.

It was freely admitted for a time by the Rockford papers, and admitted with a due sense of shame, that the law was being openly violated, and the authorities seemed to be either unable or unwilling to bring the offenders to punishment. But the law and order league, which was organized some time ago, was quietly at work and did not give up in the face of difficulties that seemed almost insurmountable. Bye and bye they began to land one after another of the proprietors of blind tigers and the Rockford papers of the 15th inst. announced in large, black type that the city was closed tight as a drum.

### Newspapers Deserve Praise.

It is impossible to distribute equitably the honors that belong to the people of Rockford for bringing about this better state of affairs, but no one will deny that the newspapers of that progressive city are entitled to a very large share of the credit. Day after day these splendid journals have hammered away at the subject of law enforcement, and while they differ among themselves as to the best method of forcing the observance of law, they were all heartily in favor of having the law observed.

The Rockford Republic earnestly supported the law and order league, holding that such an organization was necessary to focus public sentiment and bring it to bear upon the officers charged with the enforcement of law. The Register-Gazette held with apparent sincerity that a law enforcement league was no more necessary to secure the observance of the local option law than it was to secure the observance of any other law, and that the police of the city were entirely capable of bringing the offenders to justice, and would get along better without the interference of the law and order league.

### Results are the Thing Wanted.

In the light of the actual results it is difficult to agree with the Register-Gazette. However, the Illinois Issue has no desire to take sides in a controversy between its friends, when both are undoubtedly working for what they believe to be the right. Law and order leagues unquestionably have been of great service in many municipalities where conditions have existed similar to those in Rockford, but it is always possible that peculiar circumstances might make some other plan preferable.

The main thing is to have the law observed, and to defeat the organized efforts of the liquor power, which are apparent everywhere, to discredit the local option law in the eyes of the voters by making it appear that it cannot be enforced.

As has been repeatedly stated in these columns, however, the fact that the local option law has been and is being enforced in many localities, shows that it is an enforceable law, and that if it is a failure in any given community, that fact

does not impeach the law but it does impeach the public officials who are charged with the enforcement of the law in that community.

### Shortsighted and Foolish.

While the tactics of the liquor people would appear at first glance to be crafty and clever, they are in reality shortsighted and fatuous, for the average citizen is sufficiently intelligent to reason it out for himself that wherever the local option law fails it fails because the liquor people themselves persist in violating it, and it is a well established principle in law that no man has a right to go into court and take advantage of his own wrong doing; so at the bar of public opinion the liquor people will not be permitted to plead the violation of the law, for which they themselves are responsible, as an objection to the efficiency of the local option law.

### Will Hold Them Responsible.

In the last analysis the responsibility for the failure of the law in any given community will rest, not upon the men who secured the enactment of the law, but upon the liquor people themselves, who have encouraged and permitted its violation. Every day that they persist in this policy they are proving themselves to be absolutely unworthy of the privilege which they ask, viz., the privilege of selling intoxicating liquors, for if the sale of a beverage which is nowadays everywhere acknowledged to be poisonous is to be entrusted to the hands of any man it should certainly be given into the hands of men of high character who will strive to reduce the evils of the traffic to a minimum instead of being handed over to a band of law breakers who in order to make the largest amount of profit from the business will violate any restriction that is imposed upon them.

### Why it is Important.

Vigorous enforcement of the law from now on in Rockford, Decatur, Galesburg, Jacksonville and other such cities in Illinois, will do more to defeat the attempt to restore the license system in those cities next spring, than anything else, or than all things else combined, can do. The people of those cities must realize this and must not waste their time or energy in idle discussions as to methods, but get together and enforce the law. They have behind them not only the Anti-Saloon League and the people who are opposed to saloons, but a very large number of those who are in the habit of drinking with more or less moderation, but who regard the law, when once it is a law, as a sacred thing, to be rigidly enforced so long as it remains upon the books.

### By Way of Illustration.

As an instance of this kind of support, which may be counted upon in all efforts to compel respect of the law, here is a letter written to the editor of the Rockford Republic, and the editor himself adds that he is in receipt of a great many letters similar to this, showing what a large contingent outside of the anti-saloon force may be relied upon in the struggle for law enforcement.

Editor of The Republic. I want to congratulate you on the way you are handling this local option business. You're dead right. Personally I like my glass of beer and wish it was possible to have a decent place to drink it in. But apparently it isn't. The saloon is—or was—an abomination and it is right that it should go. Whether it is wise to prohibit the sale of beer entirely or not, I don't know; but the law is a law, and as long as it remains a law it should be enforced. I think the best opinion of the entire city is with you in your crusade.

M. S. B.

In view of this situation there is every reason for the friends of good government to take courage and throw their influence into every movement for the observance of law.