

## REPUBLICANS REAFFIRM RASTER RESOLUTION

### Old Time Declaration Against Prohibition and Sabbath Protection, Adopted at Command of Beer Element, Again Announced as Republican Policy

A second reading of the platform of the Republican party of the year 1908, reveals the fact that, contrary to supposition, the document, properly interpreted, is by no means silent upon the prohibition question. The final paragraph of the platform, as adopted in Chicago, reads:

"This platform of principles and purposes, our adherence to every Republican doctrine since the birth of the party, we go before the asking the support not only of those who have thus heretofore, but of all our fellow citizens, regardless of past political differences, unite in the maintenance of the policies, perpetuate the blessings you secure the achievements of a greater is"

In this paragraph fell under the eye of Mr. Robert Patton of Springfield, it at once occurred to him that in 1872 the Republican party adopted as the sixteenth plank of its platform the famous and infamous "Raster resolution" that provoked so much indignation. The wording of that resolution was seemingly harmless enough. The sixteenth plank said:

"The Republican party propose to respect the rights reserved by the people to themselves as carefully as the powers delegated by them to the state and federal government. It disapproves of the resort to unconstitutional laws for the purpose of removing evils by interfering with the rights not surrendered by the people to either the state or national government."

The history of the plank, however, and its interpretation by those who wrote it, is both significant and clear. The champion of the Raster resolution was Herman Raster, one of the leaders of the German, beer element of the Republican party. The adoption of the resolution was forced by a clearly voiced threat that failure to adopt it would mean the defection of the brewing interests from the Republican party. As a reward for its adoption the Republican candidate of that year had practically the unanimous support of the liquor interests and in the year following, referring to the overwhelming defeat of Horace Greeley, who ran for President in 1872 on the Democratic ticket, President Clausen at the brewers' national gathering in Cleveland, said: "The last Presidential election has shown us what unity among us can do." About a month after the adoption of the Republican platform, in reply to a letter of inquiry, Mr. Raster wrote the following letter in explanation of the meaning of the sixteenth plank:

"Chicago, Ill., July 19, 1872.—J. M. Miller, Dear Sir:—In reply to yours of July 8th, I have to say that

written the sixteenth resolution of the Philadelphia platform, and that it was adopted by the platform committee with the full and explicit understanding that its purpose was the discountenancing of all so-called temperance (prohibitory) and Sunday laws. This purpose was meant to be expressed in reference to the rights of the people which had not been delegated to either national or state governments; it being assured that the right to drink what one pleases (being responsible for the acts committed under the influence of strong drink), and the right to look upon the day on which Christians have their prayer meetings as any other day, were among the rights not delegated by the people, but reserved to themselves.

"Whether this explanation of the meaning of the resolution will satisfy you, I do not know. But you want to serve the cause of truth, so do not let me say what I have said here in regard to the true meaning and intent of the sixteenth resolution of the Philadelphia platform is the truth. Very respectfully yours, HERMAN RASTER."

In view of all this, after reading the reaffirmation of Republican doctrine in the platform of 1908, Mr. Patton addressed a letter of inquiry to the reputed author of the Republican platform, Attorney-General Ellis of Ohio, as follows:

"Springfield, Ill., June 22, 1908.

"HON. WADE ELLIS,

"Columbus, Ohio.

"Dear Sir:—I have noticed from the public press that you drafted the platform of the Republican convention, and I would like to know what interpretation is to be put upon the expression 'reaffirming our adherence to every Republican doctrine proclaimed since the birth of the party.' Did the authors of this platform understand that they were reaffirming the sixteenth plank of the platform of 1872? If you will kindly inform me upon this matter, I will appreciate the same.

"Yours respectfully,

"ROBERT H. PATTON."

In reply Mr. Patton received the following letter:

"Wade B. Ellis,

"Attorney-General, State of Ohio,

"Office of the Attorney-General,

"Columbus, Ohio, June 23, 1908.

"MR. ROBERT H. PATTON,

"Springfield, Ill.

"Dear Sir:—I have your letter of June 22d, and find nothing in the sixteenth plank of the platform of 1872 which is inconsistent with good Republican doctrine.

"Yours very truly,

"WADE B. ELLIS."

In other words, by the interpretation of the writer of the Republican platform of 1908, that platform reaffirms the old-time hostility of the Republican party to prohibitory law and to laws framed for guarding the Sabbath rest of the American people.

## TAFT AND PROHIBITION LAW

### What the Weighty Republican Candidate Thinks and Says About Legislation Against the Drink Evil

During the past few weeks many letters have come to the office of *The National Prohibitionist*, requesting an authoritative statement regarding the utterance concerning Prohibition, said to have been made by Secretary of War Taft in his book, "Four Aspects of Civic Duty."

Attention was first called to this matter when some two months or more ago practically every liquor paper in the country published a statement which they professed to quote from that volume. That statement as it appeared in *Bonfort's Wine and Spirit Circular* of New York, reads:

"I think the doctrine of Prohibition is at war with all the ideas and teachings of the English-speaking race. We never can tolerate the idea that because one man does not want to use a certain thing no one else is to be allowed to use it—provided, of course, that it is not

wrong in itself. If you take the ground that the use of anything containing alcohol is sinful and criminal, then the doctrine of Prohibition may be considered. But even then the question might arise whether the state could interfere with the individual conscience.

"The great majority of the good and wise men the world over, men whose characters are respected, and whose opinions are likewise respected, do not consider the use of alcoholic drink in itself either sinful or criminal. There can be no question about the side on which the wisdom and intelligence of the world's greatest and best men is enlisted in this matter. Here and there a wise man can be found who is in favor of Prohibition, but these are the exceptions and are very few. The conscience of the world goes against this doctrine."

*The National Prohibitionist* was never convinced of the genuineness of this quotation, hav-

ing failed to find the language quoted in any copy of Mr. Taft's book, and accordingly no notice was taken of the matter and nothing appeared in this paper concerning it, except an indirect reference in the bulletin of the national chairman, in which two sentences of the passage were quoted and the *Wine and Spirit Circular* cited as the authority for the same.

It is rather remarkable that, although no protest seems to have been made by the friends of Mr. Taft over the publication of the passage in the liquor papers, this reference to it in the columns of a Prohibition paper was immediately resented and a retraction demanded. *The National Prohibitionist* has nothing to retract. All that it did in the matter was to state that a certain liquor paper published a certain alleged quotation from Mr. Taft. If the liquor paper lied, it was nothing new and nothing surprising, and *The National Prohibitionist* does not hesitate to say that it appears that the liquor paper did lie. The passage quoted does not appear in any known edition of the book, "Four Aspects of Civic Duty," nor in any published report of the lectures of which that book is composed. Further still, we have what ought to be the conclusive testimony of Mr. Taft himself in a personally-signed letter, stating that he never "used the words or anything like them."

However, an examination of Mr. Taft's book before mentioned, reveals a passage that leaves little or no doubt of Mr. Taft's hostility to the Prohibition movement and Prohibition legislation. Beginning on page forty-six in the chapter, "The Duties of Citizenship Viewed From the Standpoint of a Judge on the Bench," Mr. Taft says:

"Nothing is more foolish, nothing more utterly at variance with sound public policy than to enact a law which, by reason of the conditions surrounding the community in which it is declared to be law, is incapable of enforcement. Such an instance is sometimes presented by sumptuary laws, by which the sale of intoxicating liquors is prohibited under penalty, in localities where the public sentiment of the immediate community does not and will not sustain the enforcement of the law. In such cases the legislation is usually the result of agitation by people in the country who are determined to make their fellow-citizens in the city better. The enactment of the law comes through the country representatives, who form a majority of the legislature; but the enforcement of the law is among the people who are generally opposed to its enactment, and under such circumstances the law is a dead letter. This result is the great argument in favor of so-called local option, which is really an instrumentality for determining whether a law can be enforced before it is made operative. In cases where the sale of liquor can not be prohibited in fact, it is far better to regulate and diminish the evil than to attempt to stamp it out. By the enactment of a drastic law and the failure to enforce it there is injected into the public mind the idea that laws are to be observed or violated according to the will of those affected. I need not say how altogether pernicious such a loose theory is. General Grant said that the way to secure the repeal of a bad law was to enforce it. But when the part of the community which enacts the law is not the part affected by its enforcement, this is not a practicable method. The constant violation or neglect of any law leads to a demoralized view of all laws, and the choice of the laws to be enforced then becomes as uncertain as the guess of a political executive in respect to public opinion is likely to make it. Such a policy constantly enlarges in the community the class of men with whom the sacredness of law does not exist."

This passage, it is fair to assume, accurately represents Mr. Taft's views upon the Prohibition question.

Miss Belle Kearney is to speak at twenty-six of the Chautauquas in the state of Nebraska. During the recent local option campaigns in Missouri she spoke twenty-five times at various points in that state.

California was represented at the Centennial Temperance Congress by the Rev. S. H. Taft. Mr. Taft was a member of the convention which nominated Myron H. Clark, New York's Prohibition governor, fifty-four years ago, and has all his life been engaged in the Abolition and Prohibition reforms.