

A Dead Town

The chances are that practically everybody who reads the caption above has a mental picture of a town with empty store rooms and dwellings, discouraged merchants behind dusty counters, dilapidated streets; in short, it makes us see in terms of dollars and cents. The wiping out of the saloons from a town never killed any town commercially. If any man refuses to grant that the no-license policy increases business, he at least, if governed by facts, is compelled to admit that the passing of the saloon does not kill business. In this connection let us repeat a bit from last week's Issue. It is Rockford again? Sure, but why not? Rockford has tried it both ways, with and without the saloons. It is the largest dry city in the state, and the law is enforced. The Star, of that city, says that Rockford excels each of these following wet cities in the number of factories, the number of people employed therein and in the number of residences erected, particularly in the year 1912 (this was a no-license year): Freeport, Quincy, Janesville, Wisconsin; Madison, Wisconsin; Dubuque, Iowa, and Davenport, Iowa.

But a town can be dead in another sense, in a way that affects its citizens fully as vitally as though it were facing financial ruin. Last week the Mount Morris Index spoke editorially on the subject "A Dead Town." We expected a bit of discussion about industries of one sort and another, but this is what we got. We pass it on and ask you to pass it on to your friends. Oregon is no guiltier than any other wet town of the charges made by the Index. Write to any town instead of Oregon, the facts are the same.

The Index says:

In one of the issues of the Index during the band fair a semi-humorous article appeared on "What is a band worth." In it Oregon was referred to as a dead town. This seems to have affected the nervous digestion of the editor of the Republican and he comes back with all kinds of sarcasm that fairly sizzles, and the reason it hurts us so much is because it is mostly deserved. Confession is said to be good for the soul and no one should feel at liberty to expose another's faults until he has confessed his own and indicated an intention of correcting them. This we now do. We admit our roads in every direction are a disgrace to any community and here and now say we have already taken steps to better them. One of the members of the state highway commission was here last week in response to a call of the road commissioners to advise them in the matter. Now, having come forward clothed in white and humbly confessed our guilt and expressed our determination to reform we feel at liberty to inform our brother editor that now in a serious manner we declare Oregon a dead town. We base this assertion upon the fact that Oregon permits saloons to ply their deadening influence on the community. Surely no town would allow such influences for evil to exist that was not dead to its responsibilities to the young men and women growing up in its midst.

OREGON IS DEAD to its obligations to the stranger within its gates who comes there to trade and is entitled to a clean, wholesome atmosphere.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that while it is drawing a few thousands from the spigot to build its sidewalks, the saloon-keeper, the brewery and distillery are drawing ten times as much out of the bung hole of the same barrel.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that it is one of the towns that are licensing a few men to draw into their clutches and actually murder annually in the United States sixty thousand men, women, boys and girls. Oregon is dead to the fact that it is allowing to exist in its midst, and is actually taking money for the privilege granted, factories that are making paupers, criminals, lunatics, idiots and degenerates.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that while it is calling for the people outside to favor it with their trade it is putting upon them the expense of the prosecution and support connected with these delinquents.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that 75 per cent of the expense of keeping up the saloons comes from the class least able to afford it and that the wives and children of the saloons' patrons are the ultimate sufferers.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that the farmer who lives out one or five miles from town feels that when his son or hired man goes to town he should know that he will come home sound in body, mind and purse.

OREGON IS DEAD to the fact that if it were to have a "made in Oregon exhibit" the products most numerous displayed would be its booze-fighters and drunks gathered in from miles of surrounding country. Yes, **OREGON IS DEAD**, all right. It must be. No town alive to its best interests, to the interest of its laborers, to the interest of its merchants, to the interest of the taxpayers of the country adjacent, to the interest of its boys and girls, to the interest of anxious parents, would for a petty consideration sell the right to a few men to antagonize and blast all of these most vital elements. Yes, Oregon is dead, so dead that the odor exhaled by it is offensive as far away as its bleary-eyed drunks can travel or a bottle of its whisky be carried. So dead that by all the rules of right and justice it ought to be quarantined.

But there is hope that the dead may be resurrected. The county option law is looming up. When it arrives the people outside of Oregon will remove the cause of its deadly stupor and we shall see a new Oregon nestled at the foot of the hills on the beautiful Rock River, the pride of the county enjoying the full vigor of the life it should and will possess.