

PROHIBITION IN KANSAS.

In the year 1880 the electors of Kansas voted upon and approved an amendment to the State Constitution in the following terms:

The manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors shall be forever prohibited in this State, except for medical, scientific and manufacturing purposes.

In favor of the amendment 91,874 votes were polled, and against it 84,037. In the following year the Legislature enacted a prohibitory law.

RECENT EVIDENCE.

The success of this law is fully dealt with in an important and reliable work entitled "Prohibition in Kansas," published last year by Mr. T. E. Stephens, who was Secretary of the Kansas State Temperance Union from 1895 to 1901. This book contains statements made by many Kansas citizens who occupied high official positions and are well-informed and reliable witnesses. Here are some extracts from these statements:

W. E. Stanley, Wichita, Governor of Kansas;

I have often said, and say yet, that I believe prohibition at its worst is better than high license at its best.

A. B. Taylor, President Kansas State Normal College 1882 to 1901:

To those teachers who have taught in cities where rum power ruled everything, dominating even the appointment of teachers and the method of managing the pupils, and who have also taught in Kansas, the advantages in favor of prohibition are so convincing that they are practically unanimous in its support.

F. H. Snow, Lawrence, Ex-Chancellor Kansas State University:

After a residence of more than thirty years in Kansas I can give my emphatic opinion that the amount of intoxicating liquor used by Kansas people has been vastly reduced since the adoption of the prohibitory amendment. I can especially testify to the superiority of prohibition over license in the university town in which I reside. The temptations to the use of strong drink have been greatly reduced to university students by the abolition of the open saloon.

Judge F. G. Adams, twenty-four years Secretary Kansas State Historical Society:

The prohibition policy has broken up the organized traffic in intoxicants used as a beverage.

My impression is that it has diminished the consumption at least three-fourths, probably very much more.

This policy has proved a financial benefit to the public by lessening the expenses of crime, and by adding to the efficiency of our industrial forces.

It is no more difficult to enforce prohibition than criminal laws in general.

John P. St. John, Ex-Governor of Kansas:

Let it be remembered that the poorest enforced prohibition is better than the best enforced license; for the evils inflicted by the liquor traffic under prohibition are in violation of the law, while under license they are sanctioned by it. Outside of the larger cities in the State, there is not one-tenth part as much liquor consumed as there is by an equal population in any State under license.

We have thousands of children in our public schools who never saw a man drunk, and tens of thousands who never saw a saloon. . . . I have resided in this, Johnson county, for thirty-two years, and I do not know a drunken farmer in the county. There is not a parallel in any licensed territory of equal population on earth.

John A. Martin, Ex-Governor of Kansas:

The following statements were made by this gentleman in his retiring message to the Legislature in 1889:

● Fully nine-tenths of the drinking and drunkenness prevalent in Kansas eight years ago have been abolished, and I affirm with earnestness and emphasis that this State, to-day, is the most temperate, orderly, sober community of people in the civilized world.

The abolition of the saloon has not only promoted the personal happiness and general prosperity of our citizens, but it has enormously diminished crime, has filled thousands of homes where vice and want and wretchedness once prevailed, with peace, plenty and contentment, and has materially increased the trade and business of those engaged in the sale of useful articles of merchandise.

Notwithstanding the fact that the population of the State is increasing, the number of criminals confined in our penitentiary is steadily decreasing. Many of our jails are empty, and all show a marked falling off in the number of prisoners confined. . . . The business of the police courts of the larger cities has dwindled to one-fourth of its former proportions, while in cities of the second and third class the occupation of police authorities is practically gone.

NEWSPAPER EVIDENCE.

Reliable and well-posted journals corroborate this personal testimony. Two years ago the New York Tribune had a

thorough investigation made into the working of Kansas prohibition. The following is an extract from the report of the Tribune's investigator :

The real fact is simply this: There are no drunkards in Kansas. The blear-eyed, pimply-checked old soak, who reeled about all day steaming with whiskey or beer, is a thing of the past. . . . All attempts to resubmit the question are voted down at every session of the Legislature. The law is enforced as well as any other law in at least four-fifths of the State. It is as easily enforced as any other law in nineteen-twentieths of the State, and the popular feeling is for the enforcement of this law with as much rigor as any law."

LOCAL PRESS TESTIMONY.

Kansas Journals have been outspoken in their testimony to the beneficial effects of prohibition. Here are a couple of recent extracts:

The Kansas City Journal:

The Kansas poor-houses are most all empty, and the bank vaults are crammed full of deposits. The farmers are out of debt, and have plenty of grain and cattle which they can sell at high prices whenever they want to go to market.

The Kansas Issue:

T. Porter Smith, of England, an officer of the United Kingdom Alliance, is making a special study of the temperance conditions in various countries, and has just spent several months in Kansas watching the working of the prohibitory law. The following is his testimony regarding prohibition:

"I have visited many countries, and have studied the various liquor laws, especially in England, Canada and the United States, and I know of no license community in the world where there is so little apparent drunkenness, crime, or poverty as in Kansas."

THE ROYAL COMMISSION INQUIRY.

In 1893 the Canadian Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic visited several cities in Kansas and examined sixty-five witnesses. They found that law enforcement was difficult and variable in border cities and under certain circumstances, but even in these places many witnesses testified that it had done much good. In other parts of the State the beneficial effects of prohibition were strikingly manifest. Three-fourths of the witnesses, some of them men who had opposed the adoption of prohibition, unhesitatingly testified to its good effects. The following quotations are merely samples of much similar testimony:

S. M. Gardenshire, of Topeka, Clerk of the District (County) Court, said:

We have no criminal business to speak of in this county, and we have not had since the adoption of the prohibitory policy. We have less than four cases on our docket now, in this county of eighty thousand people.

Hon. Mr. Gains, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, said:

In Dickenson County I stood before one of the high schools and asked how many of the pupils had never seen a saloon. Out of an attendance of 140, over 100 of their hands went up in answer: they were young boys and girls who had never seen a saloon. We have a four weeks' term of special training for teachers in the summer months in each county, and I have asked as many as 140 or 150 teachers at these assemblages how many had never seen a saloon, and in answer the majority of hands went up. This shows that we have driven the saloon from the State.

FACTS, NOT OPINIONS.

In May 1892, Sir Joseph Hickson, chairman of the Commission, addressed a letter to Hon. L. D. Lewelling, Governor of Kansas, asking for information regarding State liquor legislation and its effects. In reply he received the following letter:

Executive Department, Governor's Office.

TOPEKA, April 19th, 1893.

Mr. J. Hickson, Chairman, Montreal, Canada.

DEAR SIR,—Replying to your letter of the 4th inst., I have the honor to submit the document, "Prohibition in Kansas," which I think covers most of the points required in your letter. Trusting this will be satisfactory, I am yours very truly,

L. D. LEWELLING, Governor.

The full title of the pamphlet accompanying this letter was "Prohibition in Kansas; facts, not opinions." It had attached to it the following certificate:

"TOPEKA, KAN., April 16th, 1893.

"We have examined the statement prepared by the President and Secretary, and the ex-president and ex-secretary of the Kansas State Temperance Union, upon the subject of Prohibition and its results in our State. We find it a fair, honest and true statement of our condition, and we heartily endorse it as such. (Signed)

"Lyman U. Humphrey, Governor,
"William Higgins, Sec. of State,
"Timothy McCarthy, Auditor of State,
"J. W. Hamilton, Treasurer of State,
"G. W. Winans, Supt. Public Instruction,
"I. B. Kellogg, Attorney-General,
"Albert H. Horton, Chief Justice,
"D. M. Valentine, Associate Justice.
"W. A. Johnson, Associate Justice."

It would be easy to add to this mass of evidence which is only a small part of the available overwhelming proof of the success and usefulness of the Kansas Prohibitory Law.