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# IS TOBACCO DOOMED?

May 14, 1921

*A Synopsis of the Opinion of the Entire  
Country as Gathered from 7,800 Editors*

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# Leslie's



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Sidney H. Rosenberg

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*If Maud Muller Were Living Today*

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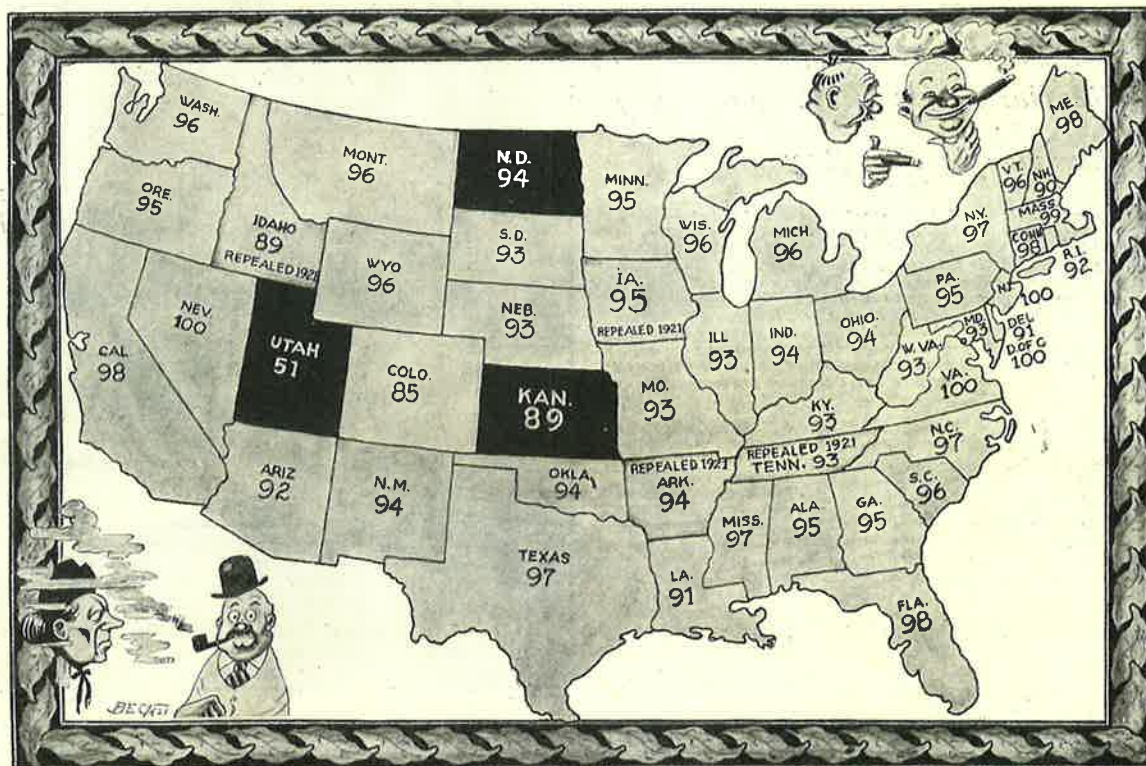


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The Anti-Tobacco Movement at a Glance

The figures in this map indicate the percentage of those newspaper editors in each State who, in answer to a country-wide questionnaire, estimate public sentiment in their respective communities as opposed to tobacco prohibition. The black States are the only ones in which anti-tobacco laws now remain. The States in which laws have been repealed during the past year are also indicated.

## Is Tobacco Doomed?

American Editors—North, South, East and West—Give an Emphatic Answer to the Question: "Does America Want to Banish Lady Nicotine?"

By GARRET SMITH

**I**S tobacco going to have its scalp added to the belt of the prohibitionist beside that of the lamented, but as yet not altogether late, alcohol?

The radical reformer says it is. Already he is whetting his knife preparatory to the scalping. Not immediately, he admits, but certainly within a generation.

He bases his prediction on the belief that there is a generally growing sentiment in favor of such prohibition throughout the country. He also points to the growth of movements against tobacco in recent years, particularly since the attainment of the Constitutional Amendment against liquor has left a large number of reformers hunting a new evil to conquer and has encouraged others to redoubled efforts against tobacco, which they consider next in line. These enthusiasts point particularly to increased legislative activity against tobacco.

But what are the actual facts of the case, dispassionately considered? Would the people of the United States, were the question put to a vote, favor the prohibition of tobacco?

Those who say not point out its long-continued and almost universal use at the present time. Discovered first by Columbus in 1492 as an American weed smoked

by the Indians, it was a botanical curiosity in Europe for nearly one hundred years. Then, with its introduction into England by Sir Francis Drake and Governor Lane of Virginia and its popularizing by Sir Walter Raleigh, it sprang into general use.

They point out that even at that time there were prohibition movements against tobacco, one of the strongest being led by an English king. Yet these movements never got anywhere. They say it is significant, in comparing the possible fate of tobacco with the fate of alcohol, that in those early days of anti-tobacco agitation no one yet dreamed of prohibiting liquor.

They point out, too, the strongly entrenched economic foothold of tobacco in the United States, which is the chief tobacco country of the world today, with an acreage of nearly 2,000,000; representing a land investment of over \$160,000,000 conservatively estimated. This acreage has more than doubled in the last fifteen years. The total value of the 1920 crop was \$208,000,000, being the value of 1,508,064,000 pounds produced last year at the average farm price of 19.8 cents a pound. This does not take into account the large investment in plants for manufacturing and distributing the finished product, for which there are as yet no official figures. There were,

however, produced during the year 8,304,618, 762 cigars, 50,408,827,557 cigarettes and 453,482,919 pounds of pipe tobacco and snuff.

Of course, those who favor prohibition of tobacco discount these arguments by the statement that the use of tobacco parallels that of liquor in that the use of liquor was at one time as widespread and universal but was more strongly entrenched, dating back before the dawn of civilization. They say further that the investment involved in the United States in the liquor business was fully as great as that now in the tobacco business.

But, as a matter of fact, those opposing tobacco prohibition rest their opinion on a fundamental difference in the effect of tobacco as compared with liquor on the human system. No matter how many cigarettes or cigars the father of the family smokes they never drive him into a frenzy. The most inveterate smoker of the weed never goes home and beats his wife and children as the result of it. On the contrary, they contend that smokers have a reputation for amiability while under the influence of tobacco.

Undoubtedly there has been increased agitation for the prohibition of tobacco in many quarters during the last

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## Is Tobacco Doomed?

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year. The result of the attempted anti-tobacco legislation during the 1921 legislative season just ending offers, however, as I will show later, little encouragement to the prohibitionist.

But, in order to determine more accurately the sentiment of the general public on the subject, an actual though indirect poll of popular opinion has been attempted by the Tobacco Merchants' Association of the United States through the Press Service Company of New York. This agency, by means of a questionnaire, has canvassed newspaper editors of the country in the belief that they can best judge the sentiment of their communities—a belief which it has put to the test in polls on other public questions.

FOR example, two years ago the Press Service Company directed a questionnaire on the subject of government ownership and operation of railroads to every newspaper in the United States. Eighty-three per cent. of the 5,000 editors who replied reported public opinion in the communities reached by their papers as opposed to such governmental activity. The accuracy of this report has since been confirmed in a number of ways, especially by the action of Congress in returning the railroads to their owners.

Last year the Press Service Company polled the editors to determine the state of public opinion toward government ownership and operation of the fertilizer, agricultural implement, automobile, food products and clothing industries. Eighty-six per cent. of the editors reported the public as opposed to government activity in those fields.

In the present questionnaire on the subject of anti-tobacco sentiment the questions asked were:

- 1: Do you favor the enactment of laws prohibiting the personal use of tobacco by adults?
- 2: In your judgment does the general sentiment of your community favor such legislation?
- 3: Is the use of tobacco personally objectionable to you?

NO arguments accompanied the questions and from their form it was entirely impossible for any editor to determine the attitude of the Press Service Co. toward tobacco.

The answers of the editors show an overwhelming opposition by the public to anti-tobacco legislation. Out of 12,518 editors queried 7,847 replied. These editors represent a combined circulation of 21,870,046. This shows the extraordinary interest in anti-tobacco legislation.

Of the 7,847 editors replying, 7,393, or 95 per cent., represented public sentiment in their communities as opposed to anti-tobacco legislation. Only 260 editors, or 3 per cent. of those replying, represented public sentiment as favorable to the prohibition of tobacco. There were 174, or 2 per cent., in doubt, while 20 failed to record their judgment.

It is of special interest to note that 569 editors in answering the first question personally favored such legislation, although only 260 of them reported that public opinion also favored the prohibition of tobacco—an indication of the conscientious effort made by the editors to distinguish public opinion from their own personal opinions.

The questionnaire results contain other evidence of their accuracy. The highest percentage of replies reporting public opinion favorable to the prohibition of tobacco came from Utah, where 42 per cent. of the editors thought the public was for such a movement while 51 per cent. said "no," and 7 per cent. were doubtful. Utah is the only State which has since adopted an anti-cigarette law. The result

was forecast by several of the editors who stated that the influence of the Mormon Church was against tobacco. The Mormon Church is also strong in Idaho where the use of tobacco was recently prohibited, but only for a very brief period, the prohibition measure being almost immediately repealed. In this State 89 per cent. of the editors estimate sentiment in their communities as being against tobacco prohibition, which, nevertheless, is 6 per cent. below the average reported opposition.

Further analysis of legislation on the subject, checked up with the returns of the questionnaire, indicates the accuracy of this test of sentiment.

The legislature of Tennessee some weeks ago passed and the governor has signed a bill repealing the Anti-Cigarette Law of that State. The questionnaire showed 93 per cent. of its editors believed the public against anti-tobacco legislation. The legislature of Arkansas has also just passed a bill repealing its anti-cigarette law. In this State 94 per cent. reported against tobacco prohibition.

A bill introduced in the current legislature of Arizona to prohibit smoking in public dining-rooms and other public places was first amended to prohibit the consumption in public of peanuts, chewing-gum, tea and coffee, and then defeated by the Senate. The questionnaire returns received from that State were 92 per cent. "no."

IN Iowa where the "no's" were 95 per cent. a bill repealing the anti-cigarette law has just been signed by the governor.

Nevertheless, in North Dakota a bill has passed the legislature providing for the more rigid enforcement of its old anti-cigarette law. Here, however, the questionnaire percentage of "no's" was 94, indicating that the measure is an unpopular one.

Last year a petition for a referendum in Oregon to prohibit the use of tobacco failed of sufficient signatures to bring the question to a vote, and 95 per cent. of the editors there declare their public against the legislation.

In Oklahoma an anti-cigarette bill was reported unfavorably in the House. The editors of that State reported 94 per cent. against its public support.

While, therefore, excepting in the case of Oregon, and there only negatively, there has been no direct expression by the voters themselves, it is pretty evident from the foregoing that such an expression, if obtainable, would be strongly against tobacco legislation. Outside of the one State where Mormon influence predominates, the anti-cigarette movement appears, as in the case of Tennessee, Arkansas and Iowa, to be losing ground and is not to any considerable extent supported by the people.

WITH forty-two State legislatures in session this year the sum total of the results of the onslaught on tobacco is the passage of a cigarette-prohibiting law in the Mormon State Utah, with a population of 449,446, as against the repeal of the old anti-cigarette laws in the three States of Arkansas, Iowa and Tennessee, with an aggregate population of 6,492,084. Furthermore Tennessee and Arkansas had their prohibitory laws in effect for over twenty years and were, therefore, pretty thoroughly acquainted with the merits and demerits of such legislation.

In other words, the activities of those reformers who have taken up the prohibition of tobacco is not largely supported by public opinion and has attracted a degree of attention entirely out of proportion to its importance.

## On the "Irish Question" the Attitude of Most Intelligent Americans Is

"IF anyone can tell me the true story of just what is the trouble in Ireland, I wish he would do so." The newspapers give practically no facts—except casualties. Some infer the trouble is due to religion. Others deny that. Nobody seems to know. Every publisher knows this—the facts about Ireland are hard to get. No one yet knows them or has published them. METROPOLITAN has determined to give America the

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### William Hard

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The policy of METROPOLITAN for years has been to find and present important and fresh material of national import. "The Life of Maria Botchkareva," the leader of the Russian Women's Death Battalion, is a case in point. Americans had only the vaguest ideas about Lenin and his rule in Russia until Raymond Robins' articles in METROPOLITAN gave the true story. Both these series were published in advance of any general public information on the subject.

The article by William Hard on conditions in Haiti caused a great ruction, but no one denied its truth. Mr. Burleson decided to stop the magazine and after holding it up for a few days he found he had to change his mind.

"The Intimate Diary of Margot Asquith," since published by a newspaper syndicate and also in book form, appeared first in METROPOLITAN. That was the biggest magazine "scoop" of 1920.

In the March, 1921, METROPOLITAN, Wallace Thompson's article explained the real situation in Mexico today. It is the first time the facts have been presented to America.

### Correct National News First

That has been the policy which has made METROPOLITAN successful and a real opinion-making influence for years—the giving of correct national news and giving it first.

And that is the job on our hands now—to give the truth about Ireland and to give it first. William Hard will do that. You can read the real truth about Ireland in the June METROPOLITAN now published. Other articles by Hard on Ireland will follow. He will stay in Ireland until he has the case completed. These Irish articles are the most important now being published in American periodical journalism.

You can get the METROPOLITAN from your newsdealer—or any newsstand—for 25 cents. If you prefer, send us your address and \$3.00 and the METROPOLITAN will be mailed you for a year.

# Metropolitan

H. J. Whigham, Publisher

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