

PROHIBITION

ITS ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL ASPECTS

BY

HERMAN FELDMAN, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, AMOS TUCK SCHOOL
OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE;
AUTHOR OF "THE REGULARIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT"



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PREFACE

The occasion for this study was the preparation of a series of twenty articles for the press, each dealing with some specific economic or industrial aspect of prohibition. The findings were the result of an investigation conducted over a wide area, including an elaborate questionnaire survey. The writer is indebted to a large number of industrial concerns, government officials, trade association secretaries, insurance agents, social service executives, brewers, distillers, trade union agents and others—in all, some two thousand persons—who supplied the information contained here.

This study is not put forward as complete or exhaustive, and should not be regarded as more than a preliminary survey. In some instances the facts were almost inextricable and the author has merely done what he could with them under the conditions. The original articles have, however, been enlarged and thoroughly revised, and new material, such as an appendix dealing with alcoholic deaths, added.

The conclusions reached, which are summarized in Chapter XXI, relate only to the one phase of prohibition discussed—the economic and industrial aspects. Since the question as a whole involves many other considerations—moral, legal, administrative, political, social—I have avoided entirely the controversial issue as to whether or not the Eighteenth Amendment should have been passed or liquor legislation should have taken the particular form of the Volstead Act, nor do I offer suggestions as to what should be done about the prohibition laws to-day. The reasons for limiting the range of this

study, and the scope and methods of the research, are explained in detail in the introductory chapter.

Anyone writing on prohibition is subject to the suspicion of being biased. In this instance the situation is further complicated, first, because the articles were originally prepared for *The Christian Science Monitor*, a newspaper that has strongly championed the Eighteenth Amendment, and, second, because most of the economic results of the measure are reported as being favorable to prohibition. It is to be supposed that this will prejudice the case for some people.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the writer undertook the study solely as a matter of research, and that the *Monitor* limited the instructions to an insistence upon impartial investigation and the presentation of comprehensive and authoritative data. There was not the slightest suggestion intending to influence the findings, and articles showing the economic disadvantages of prohibition were given as prominent a place as those more favorable to the measure. The writer cannot speak too highly of the liberal editorial policy shown by the *Monitor* in this connection.

Most of the topics considered were approached entirely from the statistical side, the writer being quite in the dark as to what the data would show. The preference would have been to present merely the facts, allowing the reader to form his own judgments entirely. But in many places the figures available were not adequate for a purely quantitative treatment, and the information would have been more confusing than enlightening. In the belief that a reader of a book of this sort likes to compare his own deductions with the author's, conclusions have been expressed in several cases, but they are not intended in a dogmatic spirit. It is recognized that

with the law less than eight years old, and the absence of complete data for even this limited period, the vexing problem of prohibition is too complicated for over-positive statement.

For still another reason there can be nothing final in the conclusions offered. Although the economic and industrial effects studied have, on the whole, proved favorable to prohibition, stability has by no means been reached in certain statistics which may be regarded as indexes of the workings of the prohibition law. These indexes have in some cases shown an unexpected trend during the past few years. They strongly indicate that the next few years will prove the crucial ones in determining whether prohibition is achieving its purposes or showing evidences of disintegration. They suggest the need for carefully watching and compiling the objective data that may enable the public to determine what changes are occurring.

H. F.

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