

September 25, 1930

My dear Mr. Graves:

Thank you for your recent letter. It is a satisfaction to me to have you say that you believe that I am honestly interested in the improvement of conditions and that I am not in the pay of the "whiskey interests." There are not a few people who write me that they believe me to be a hired agent of those gentlemen.

You ask if I have published anything else recently on the subject. Yes, an article, a copy of which I am enclosing, and another in the October Delineator of which I have no extra copies. You will find it on the newstands, if you care to look it over.

You say that if the officers of the law, from top to bottom in Federal Government and in the States, would really try to enforce the law, they could do it. I do not agree with you, dear Mr. Graves. When you have a big minority, honestly opposed to a law, believing it contrary to the Constitution and at war with human nature, there is no possibility of enforcement in my judgment. Laws have no standing except by the consent of the people. The majority cannot put over a law that the minority does not believe in and will not accept. You must find some other way to reach your end.

I think that you and I would differ about the end. In my mind it is temperance - controlled appetite. I do not agree that a well-made liquor, moderately used, is a poison. The difficulty, as I see it, is the abuse. The aim in my judgment should be intelligent self-control. But intelligent self-control is something that you can not force on people. As I look at this question, it is a matter of education and my greatest alarm is that by prohibiting liquor we have destroyed our ability and opportunity to educate.

Moreover, we have given an opportunity to those who are naturally greedy and lawless to build up a vast illegal machine for handling liquor. Through prohibition a lawlessness, more dangerous to the moral character of the country than drunkenness itself is fostered.

I really feel very distressed about the whole matter. I do not pretend to say that what I am writing is always right or wise, but it is as I feel. Please bear with me and believe me

Very sincerely

Mr. Walter Graves
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