

October 3, 1930

Dear Dr. Murlin;

I am under real obligation to you for your kind and well-argued letter of September 23rd. You do not accuse me of being in league with the liquor interests - you give me the credit of being seriously concerned over the situation in which we find ourselves. And you ask me a question which you have a right to ask and which I never have answered satisfactorily to myself and that is:- What is to be the practical substitute to slip into the place of the Amendment in case it is repealed? I do not know. I have not found a conclusion satisfactory to myself. I am enclosing an article, recently published in which you will see that I admit I do not know.

In my judgment, it is going to be many years before we can repeal the 18th Amendment. If you will look at the present Constitution of The Senate and The House, in the copy of "Time" for September 29th, you will find an analysis, which every interested student of this matter ought to consider. It shows how utterly impossible it is for us to expect a repeal for a very long time, to expect even a modification of the Volstead Act.

Now, my feeling is, that this fact ought to keep both the supporters and the opponents of the 18th Amendment cool. It gives them time for study - for a much more thorough, candid, rational study of the whole question of intemperance than we have ever had before. I hope we are going to get this.

On one point, I do not agree with you and that is, that prohibition at its worst is better than the old conditions. We have an organized lawlessness now of a much more dangerous, secret and wide-spread character than we had before, and I am not forgetting the worst of the Pre-Revolutionary exhibits. Indeed, I knew them in those days very well and I have reviewed them frequently in the last year or two, in the effort to get my own mind clear on the subject.

There is one question I would like to ask you. Do you think that the teaching which has been broadcast in this country by prohibitionists - the teaching that alcohol is a poison and that a glass of wine is a sin, is honest? Alcohol is a poison, only when abused. It is a temptation, of course - a

glass of wine is a temptation. I do believe, dear Dr. Murlin, that those who are striving for temperance through prohibition, and I take it it is not prohibition per se that you are interested in, but a temperate country, should examine this teaching candidly. It seems to me that there is a fundamental dishonesty in claiming that a glass of wine is a physical poison. Maybe I am not getting it very clear, but I am trying to tell you how I feel about this, for the reason that you wrote me so candidly and that you put to me questions which I consider eminently fair and that any opponent of the 18th Amendment must set his mind to if he is serious in his opposition.

I shall be honored if you will take the trouble to answer this letter. You spoke of sending an article by a friend, Dr. McLaughlin. I have never received it and should be interested to have it.

Very sincerely yours

Dr. L. H. Murlin
Shoreledge
Newagen, Maine.