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How to Stop the Dry Killings

WE MIGHT as well think clearly about these dry killings. They are tragic, naturally, but they are a necessary part of the dry law. Keep that straight.

The Jones Act made a violation of prohibition a felony. Under our system of law, policemen use firearms to prevent the commission of felonies. Inevitably gun play follows the prohibition act.

Furthermore, the arrest of a rum runner is not a child's game. Rum runners are outlaws. Many of them are gunmen. They war among themselves and they fight enforcement officials. Everybody understands that.

If policemen are to attack the bootleg traffic in alcohol, we shall have to expect shooting.

Policemen may be killed in the process and certainly innocent bystanders will be in jeopardy. Some rum runners may also be assassinated.

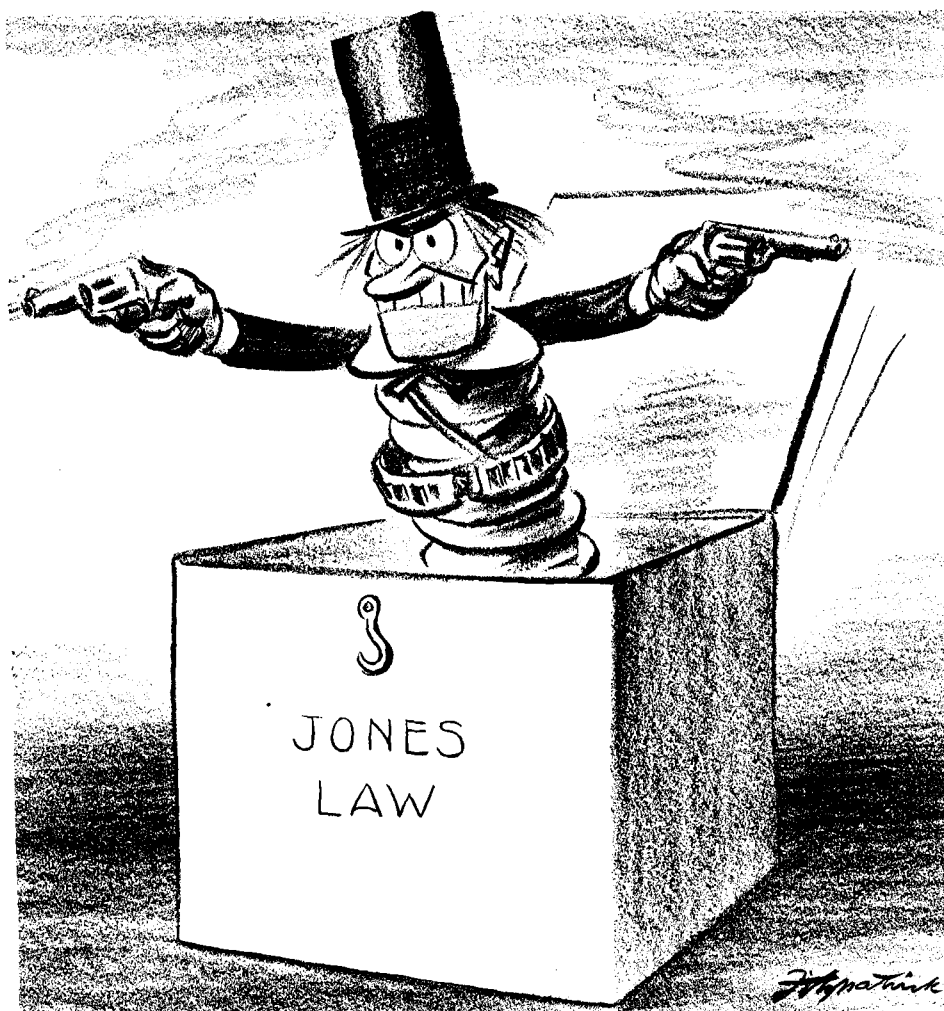
Congress understood this when the Jones law was passed. Congressmen and Senators are not guileless babies. They know how laws are enforced. They are familiar with American police methods. They knew that when the sale of liquor was made a legal felony killings were the logical consequence!

The radical dries who advocated the Jones law perceived plainly the natural result of the measure they demanded. If they thought at all, they realized that the enforcement of the drastic statute would cost many lives.

Why then express surprised horror when we reap the harvest we have sowed?

Citizens of border communities who petitioned President Hoover to disarm the enforcement officers could hardly be expected to take a detached view of the killing of their townsmen. They are too close to the tragedies. Others who are opposed to such episodes might, however, be a little more reasonable.

It was all right for President Hoover to say: "I deeply deplore the killing of any



person." Of course he does, but that regret won't save many lives so long as the government makes an honest effort to enforce the Jones law.

If we don't want dry killings, we don't want the Jones law. You cannot pass a law declaring an act to be a felony and hire policemen to prevent the violation of that law without having violence, at least not in the United States.

More than that, if we don't want the Jones law we don't want prohibition.

The Price of Enforcement

If, as a nation, we really are convinced that federal prohibition is the right road to sobriety, then we shall have to pay the price of enforcement.

The Volstead Act made the sale of liquor a misdemeanor, and bootleggers made a joke of the law. The Jones Act turned the misdemeanor into a felony, and shooting was heard. It is all a logical development.

The natural end of prohibition is killing. Not everybody will have to be shot but enough to put the fear of the law in the hearts of those who would violate it.

If we don't want prohibition enforced in the only way possible, then, actually, we don't want prohibition. A law not enforced is no law.

It is unfair and unreasonable to demand a law with drastic penalties and then to protest when the penalties are applied. Killing is a necessary part of the present prohibition statutes and killings will be continued until the law is repealed or forgotten.

The sane way out obviously is to amend the Eighteenth Amendment so that local self-government may be restored to the forty-eight states.

The confusion arises from the conflict between our laws and our customs. The law says that the sale of intoxicating liquors is a crime. Several million people believe that this particular law is asinine and

proceed to act on that assumption. So the shooting goes on.

Beneath the entire disturbance is a fundamental error. Since history dawned, men have made repeated and vain efforts to reform their fellows by force.

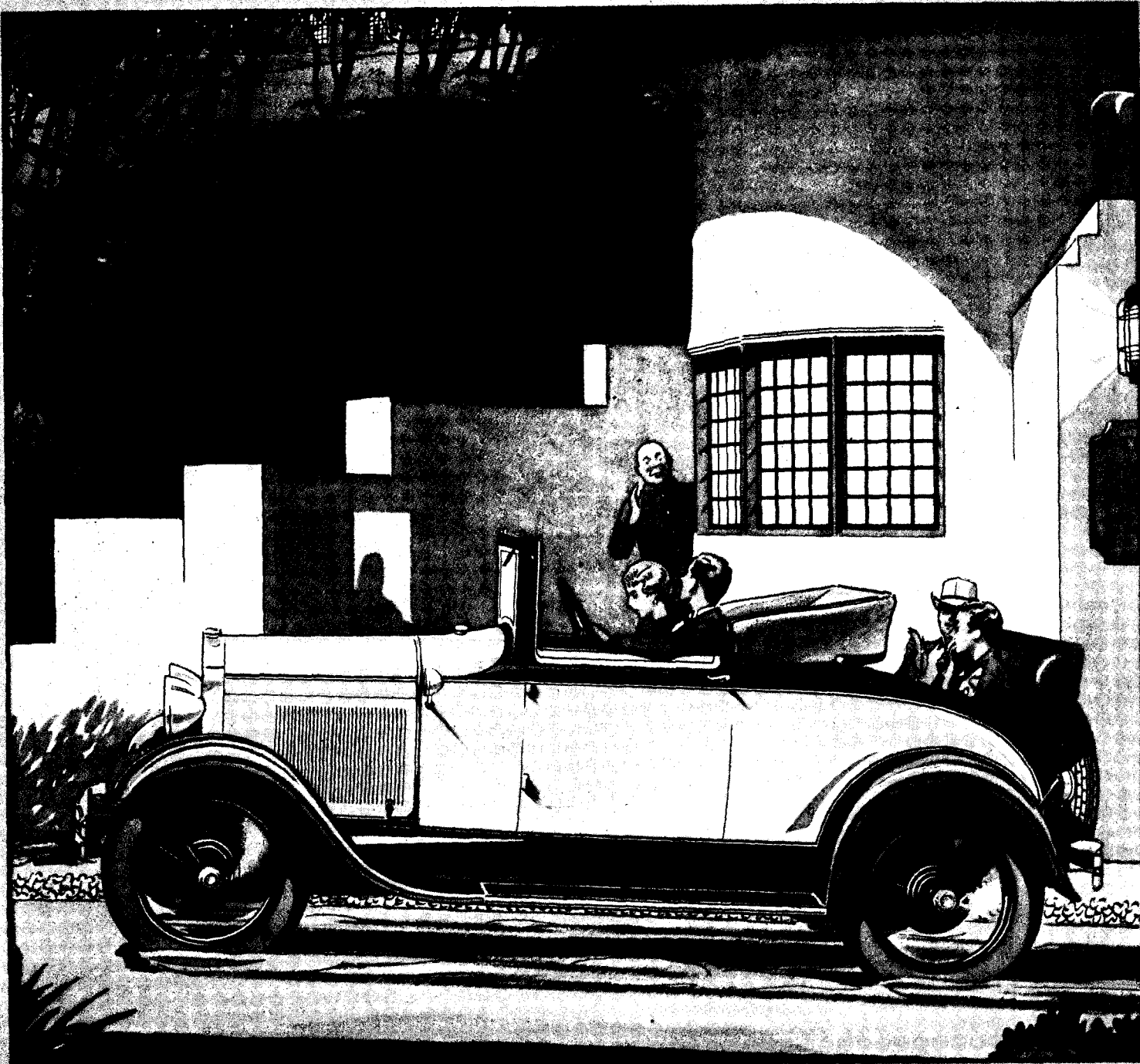
Prohibition is an attempt to impose the will of those who are against drink upon those who like it. Essentially, prohibition is force. It is effective only as that force is overwhelming.

The better way is temperance through persuasion. You can lead where you can't drive.

We forgot these fundamentals of human nature when the Eighteenth Amendment and its enforcing statutes were put into effect.

The killings along the border and in the Southern states remind us of the truth we ignored.

If you want to stop the dry killings, amend the Eighteenth Amendment. There is no other honorable way.



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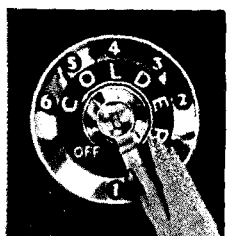
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