

Ferdie J. Deering JAN. 29 1975

Liquor-By-Drink Defeat Needed

WHEN a speaker, presumably an authority on alcoholism, was asked at an Oklahoma City parents' organization meeting a few weeks ago, "What causes alcoholism?" he replied: "We still don't know."

If the speaker had given the matter much thought, he could have concluded that the cause of alcoholism is alcohol. It has no other cause. The National Council on Alcoholism says that if drinking whiskey, gin, champagne or beer disrupts a person's life and continues to do so, he or she is an alcoholic.

This matter is pertinent and current in Oklahoma, because a new move has been announced to expand opportunities for drinking through legalization of liquor-by-the-drink saloons.

A considerable number of so-called private clubs presently serve liquor by the drink illegally. Supporters of open saloons are joining forces with anti-liquor groups to intensify enforcement of liquor laws, but with wide diversity of motives.

Out of 100 million drinkers of alcoholic beverages in the United States, statistics show that about 10 million are doomed to become chronic alcoholics. Less than 10 per cent of these will ever recover. About 450,000 a year become derelicts, or "skid row bums," as a result of excessive consumption of alcohol.

Dr. Nicholas Pace, corporate medical director of General Motors Corp., said recently that employees

with drinking problems are absent from work an average of 93 days a year and that their sickness and accident claims are four times the normal.

The Oklahoma Mental Health Department's division on alcoholism has estimated that 5 per cent of the work force in the state are alcoholics. That is about 60,000 persons. Who wants more?

The alcoholic liquor industry often emphasizes the amount of taxes that it pays (estimated at \$8.8 billion in a recent year). It says nothing about the cost in taxes needed for enforcement of laws related to drinking or about the \$15 billion a year attributable to lost earnings of drinkers, cost of health care services and property damage.

Each year, about 25,000 highway deaths are attributed to individuals who drive while under the influence of alcohol.

Unquestionably, one of the worst aspects of making liquor more readily available is its effects on young people. A federally sponsored study released in November classified 28 per cent of the nation's teen-agers as problem drinkers and reported that youths are starting to drink at earlier ages. One-fifth of Oklahoma's alcoholics are estimated to be under 18 years old.

Alcoholism is rated as America's third most deadly disease, after heart disease and cancer. It is hard to conceive of a movement to legalize sale of materials over the counter to cause additional heart disease and cancer.

Liquor

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Feb. 3, 1976

Mr. Ferdie Deering,
Editorial Writer
Oklahoman & Times,
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Dear Ferdie:

Just a note to let you know I think your recent editorial - "Liquor - By - Drink Defeat Needed" is a masterpiece! I've placed the clipping in my Bible and plan to use it soon in a discussion with my Sunday School class.

It was good to read that Ferdie Deering will be honored during the up-coming Fat Stock Show -- a recognition that is well-deserved.

"In my book", you are a great Oklahoman and you get better with age.

Here's wishing for you many more years of service. Thanks for every favor.

Sincerely,

T-Bone.