

**Ferdie J. Deering**

## Liquor Battle Victory Temporary Unless Children Educated Promptly

**O**KLAHOMANS need not feel smug about defeat of the proposal to allow open saloons. "Old Demon Rum" is still around and his advocates for the right to sell more will be back.

A strong educational program is needed now to teach young people and children that drinking is a bad habit and that the best way to avoid becoming a victim is not to take a drink.

This training properly should begin in the home, and a good example by parents helps. Not just "moderation," but an example of neither drinking nor serving alcoholic beverages.

Because alcohol is the cause of the third-ranking killer, alcoholism, and has other debilitating effects, schools should include warnings against its use in health courses. However, teachers who drink may not be very convincing to observing youngsters. They need to set good examples, too.

Television has been criticized for violence and explicit sex, not without reason, but little has been said about the brash "brainwashing" job it does with liquor. Tabulations show that thousands of drinking scenes appear on home TV screens yearly. Make your own tabulation and find out.

Liquor interests obtained court rulings to squelch Sooner Alcohol and Narcotic Education (SANE) during the campaign. However, new groups were formed quickly to take up the fight and indications have been made that vigorous drives against alcohol will be continued by SANE and others.

Proponents of State Question 515

claimed that more than 1,100 private clubs are dispensing liquor illegally in the state. If their claims are true, the legislature has a job to do. It has obligatory responsibility to enact laws that will carry out the expressed will of the majority of voters.

Law enforcement officers who fail to arrest known violators, district attorneys who fail to prosecute them vigorously and judges or juries who let offenders off with light fines or probation may be guilty of perjury by failing to uphold the laws, or even malfeasance if they deliberately avoid enforcement.

Citizens can protect their health by refusing to drink liquor or beer, but there is no way that they can protect themselves against crime, overt immorality and drunken driving associated with or resulting from drinking.

The burden for these undesirable aspects of liquor falls squarely upon the shoulders of elected officials. Too often, public officials themselves have been arrested for drunken driving and let off with little or no punishment. A drunken officeholder may be just as dangerous behind a steering wheel as a drunken bum would be.

It will be at least two years before the liquor interests come back with another petition to legalize larger sales of their destructive products. In the meantime, they will continue to try to persuade children and young people that it is their right to drink and to get drunk.

Someone else will have to convince them that exercise of that right may be wrong, if they turn into alcoholics.