

Ferdie J. Deering

AUG 26 1980

Gambling, Liquor Forces Busy Again

HERE COME the gambling and liquor interests again! They hit Oklahoma as regularly as drouth and are about as beneficial.

Both alliances have the same objective in mind. They want to make more money without regard for effects their businesses may have upon the citizenry of the state.

Both alliances are trying to achieve their objectives by hammering down the resistance of public opinion to legalization and increased numbers of places to attract more customers.

Both alliances argue that it is impossible to enforce existing laws against their demands, a situation which they have helped to create by flaunting state laws through illegal operations.

Both alliances claim that because other states have legalized gambling and liquor by the drink, Oklahoma should not be above such things. Oklahoma ought to do "what everybody else is doing," they say, even if it is bad.

Both alliances claim that legalization would bring millions of dol-

lars into the public treasury, implying this would result in lowered taxes for individuals and businesses. Anybody who supposes that the legislature would not find ways to spend any increased revenue without reducing taxes is naive.

Anyone who presumes that having liquor available by the drink in legal open saloons would result in greater temperance has not been reading the statistics. More alcoholism is the inevitable result.

Regardless of the 55 mph speed limit, liquor still is involved in at least half of all fatal automobile accidents. Having more places where motorists (including tourists) could get a drink or two or three certainly may be expected to result in more intoxicated drivers.

The evils of gambling are too many to mention. By publicizing huge estimates of values of horse ranches and horse flesh in the state, gambling interests try to make us believe that everybody would be more prosperous if people had legalized gambling.

There is no doubt that track owners and racing tycoons would come

out ahead. The gambling system guarantees that. The tracks always win by taking a cut first, and 90 percent of the gamblers always lose.

The idea of county option ostensibly would enable citizens to keep effects of gambling (or liquor by the drink) out of certain areas. If provided, this plan would only result, in all probability, in more campaigns for local option elections to take over county after county.

On gambling, county option would be a farce. If race track gambling were to be legalized statewide, there probably would be only two or three major tracks. Legalizing gambling in some counties would result in virtually no enforcement of laws against it in other areas.

Oklahomans again are being told that they voted wrong in previous elections on gambling and liquor by the drink. Promoters figure we will slip eventually and fall for their misleading propaganda.

Neither of these groups has the wellbeing of Oklahoma citizens and our young people at heart. They just want our money!

LETTERS

SEP 11 1980
*Honesty or hypocrisy
real issue on drinks*

TO THE EDITOR:

I just read Ferdie Deering's Aug. 26 editorial "Gambling, Liquor Forces Busy Again." Mr. Deering has obviously been isolated from city life for the past 22 years for there is indeed liquor-by-the-drink already available — unless, of course, the same officials who are looking the other way have succeeded in convincing Mr. Deering that since they don't see it, it doesn't exist. It's sort of like "The Emperor's New Clothes" in reverse.

What the issue is over is one of honesty over hypocrisy. We citizens cannot tolerate disrespect for the law, it only leads to disrespect for all laws — a complete abandonment of all morality.

I am sure no one wants to have cocktails thrust down our throats when we don't want them, but Oklahomans can no longer hope liquor-by-the-drink will go away, unless they are prepared to launch a strict campaign against all alcohol abuses. Localities must zone businesses properly to keep their moral codes working.

The club owners will no doubt fight this legislation tooth and nail. It will put them out of business. They will no longer recruit lovely young women to dance nude before a smoke-filled room of leering men. I am sure that is not all that goes on.

If we don't want liquor-by-the-drink, then we must in good conscience close down all places where it could possibly happen — no exceptions. But if Oklahoma is ready and willing to be honest and create legislation for responsible alcohol control, then we must do so now, in 1980.

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