

# HOUSE, 176 TO 55, OVERRIDES VETO OF WAR PROHIBITION

President's Message a Great Surprise and Causes Hurry and Excitement on Floor.

SENATE MAY CONCUR TODAY.

"Dry" Forces in the House Found "Wets" Were Weak and Voted Down All Delay.

31 NEW YORKERS ABSENT

Also 24 Pennsylvanians Away—Enough "Wets" Among These to Have Defeated Action.

*Special to The New York Times.*

WASHINGTON, Oct. 27.—President Wilson today vetoed the Wartime National Prohibition Enforcement bill. Two hours after he had sent his veto message to the House that body passed the bill over his disapproval by a vote of 176 to 55, with two members voting "present."

The opposition commanded twenty-one votes more than the necessary two-thirds to pass a bill over the President's veto.

The "dry" forces are strong in the Senate, and it is predicted that the Senate will concur in the House action tomorrow by an overwhelming vote. The bill was passed originally by the Senate without the formality of a roll call.

In disapproving the bill to enforce wartime prohibition the President was obliged to veto the provision carried in the same measure to enforce the national prohibition amendment, which becomes operative on Jan. 16 next. No such action as that taken by the President was expected, and there was an especially notable absence of members from "wet" States when the veto message appeared shortly after 5 o'clock. But, even at that, the leaders of the "dry" forces did not at first believe they had sufficient votes on hand to override the veto.

With the celebration arranged for the King of the Belgians in the House tomorrow, and "calendar Wednesday" filled with important measures, Speaker Gillett, Mr. Mondell, Republican leader, and Representative A. J. Volstead, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the latter in charge of the prohibition fight, declared that it would be best to fix Thursday to consider the veto. Accordingly this date was tentatively agreed upon in justice to absent members, as well as because of the congestion of the calendar, and many members left the chamber with that understanding.

Within another hour, after several strategic moves had been made which showed the weakness of the "wet" forces, the program of delay was suddenly abandoned, and the "steam roller" was employed, against the protest of the Republican leader, Mr. Mondell, to overcome the President's veto before adjournment. There were many loud cries of dissent from the "wet" faction, but the anti-saloon leaders, who had conferred with their friends on the floor within a few minutes after Mr. Volstead had offered his motion to consider the veto on Thursday, insisted that the record should be completed today.

**A Rush for the House.**

Republican Senate leaders rushed into the House. They declared that the President's message reflected the wishes of his close political advisers, and insisted that the Republican Party must go on record against letting down the bars while the country was facing a nation-wide strike. This and the demands of the prohibition chiefs caused Representative Volstead to reverse his early position and consent to putting the veto to a vote tonight.

The House was lolling along with the oil leasing bill, when shortly after 4 o'clock the two dozen listless members were electrified with the report that the President had vetoed the prohibition measure. In a very few minutes the chamber began to fill and at 5 o'clock, when the clerk began to read the message, there was a good-sized membership present. Excitement was apparent everywhere. The veto message came as one of the great surprises of the session. It was generally expected that the President, on account of illness, would allow the bill to become a law by default. When his still and definite message of protest against the enforcement of war-time prohibition came to the House it created a real sensation.

**Text of Veto Message:**

The text of the message was as follows:

To the House of Representatives:  
I am returning, without my signature, H. R. 6810, "an act to prohibit intoxicating beverages, and to regulate the manufacture, production, use

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# HOUSE OVERRIDES PROHIBITION VETO

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and sale of high proof spirits for other than beverage purposes, and to insure an ample supply of alcohol and promote its use in scientific research and in the development of fuel, dye, and other lawful industries."

The subject matter treated in this measure deals with two distinct phases of the prohibition legislation. One part of the act under consideration seeks to enforce wartime prohibition. The other provides for the enforcement which was made necessary by the adoption of the constitutional amendment. I object to and cannot approve that part of this legislation with reference to wartime prohibition.

It has to do with the enforcement of an act which was passed by reason of the emergencies of the war and whose objects have been satisfied in the demobilization of the army and navy and whose repeal I have already sought at the hands of Congress. Where the purposes of particular legislation arising out of war emergency have been satisfied, sound public policy makes clear the reason and necessity for repeal.

It will not be difficult for Congress, in considering this important matter, to separate these two questions and effectively to legislate regarding them: making the proper distinction between temporary causes which arose out of wartime emergencies and those like the constitutional amendment of prohibition which is now part of the fundamental law of the country.

In all matters having to do with the personal habits and customs of large numbers of our people we must be certain that the established processes of legal change are followed. In no other way can the salutary object sought or accomplished by great reforms of this character be made satisfactory and permanent.

WOODROW WILSON.

The White House, 27 October, 1919.

The unexpectedness of the President's action threw the leadership on both sides into confusion. No one seemed to know just what to do. The "wet" forces were so pleased with the news that they gathered in groups and praised the President, while others talked of the political advantages and disadvantages involved. Mr. Volstead, as the leader of the "dry" forces, was without knowledge of his strength and at first agreed to wait until Thursday to consider the message. He so moved after the message had been read.

Representative Walsh of Massachusetts, accepting the leadership of the "wet" forces in the absence of the regular captain, moved that the message be laid on the table. The latter's motion was defeated by a vote of 80 to 176, with one member voting "present." Representative Madden of Illinois, favoring delay, tried to get through a motion to adjourn. This was defeated by a vote of 46 to 54.

In these votes the strength of the "dry" forces was seen and, immediately after the House had refused to delay action or adjourn, Mr. Volstead attempted to get permission to withdraw his original motion. This was re-

fused. Then under the rules Mr. Volstead had to vote against his own motion. The vote against postponement was 222 to 148.

At 6:30 o'clock, after several other parliamentary moves, all of which showed "dry" strength, the final vote was taken on the question whether the House would override the President's veto. This was carried by a vote of 176 to 55, with two voting "present."

The latter were Representatives Sears of Florida and Stines of Rhode Island.

## New York "Wets" Absent.

There were more than enough "wet" advocates from New York and Pennsylvania absent from the House to have prevented the passage of the prohibition measure over the President's veto if they had been present. Thirty-one of New York's forty-three members and twenty-four of Pennsylvania's thirty-six members were absent.

The absent members from New York State were Hicks, Caldwell, MacCrate, Cullen, Johnston, Rowe, Maher, O'Connell, Haskell, Riordan, Goldfogle, Sullivan, La Guardia, Dooling, Smith, Bell, Carew, Rowan, Slegel, Donovan, McKiniry, Husted, Crowther, Snell, Hill, Magee, Houghton, Dunn, Sanders, Dempsey, and Reed—total, 31.

Those from New York who voted to sustain the President were Cleary, Griffin, Platt, Ward, Sanford, Snyder, MacGregor, and Mead—total, 9.

Those from New York who voted to override the veto were Parker, Snell, Mott, and Gould—total, 4.

The twenty-four Pennsylvania members absent were Vare, Graham, Moore, Costello, Butler, Watson, Griest, Casey, Reber, McFadden, Dewalt, Leshner, Kreider, Brooks, Jones, Wilson, Temple, Shreve, Steele, Hulings, Porter, Morin, Crago, and Burke.

## Senate Likely to Concur Today.

The Senate will consider the veto message tomorrow and, judged by the votes on wartime prohibition in that body, the President will be over-ridden and the law to enforce wartime and national prohibition will go into effect over his protest.

If Congress has accepted the veto, there would have been no real change in the situation regarding the sale of liquor in most sections of the country. The wartime prohibition enforcement act says that no liquor containing more than one half of one per cent. of alcohol shall be sold or manufactured, while the wartime prohibition act itself forbids the sale of intoxicants. Several Federal courts have decided that beer containing two and three-fourths per cent. of alcohol is non-intoxicating. Where such decisions have been made the saloons and hotels have been selling beer with this percentage of alcohol.

Great opposition exists among members of Congress to lifting the wartime prohibition at this time when the country is in the throes of strikes. If Congress places its approval again on the prohibition enforcement laws, two and three-quarters per cent. beer cannot be sold. However, the President has it in his power to proclaim war-time prohibition ended when peace is declared and military demobilization has been completed.

Senator Sheppard of Texas, who has been in command of the prohibition fight in the Senate, said that since the House passed the bill over President Wilson's veto the Senate certainly would do likewise. Senator Sheppard pointed out that when President Wilson some months ago sought to have legislation enacted for the repeal of war-time prohibition the vote of the Senate against such repeal was 55 to 11.

Senator Penrose of Pennsylvania made

this comment on the President's veto:

"It seems to me to be the old story of playing cheap politics. No regard seems to have been given to some \$400,000,000 taxes which have been secured and which is sorely needed, and entire indifference is exhibited for unfortunate people who have paid taxes upon beverages which they are unable to dispose of. The absence of any serious or consistent purpose in the method of treating important questions involved has caused me very largely to give up any further consideration of the situation. Any blame, criticism or praise that is to be attached to the outcome will have to be borne by the Democratic administration, which has, invariably, juggled the issue."

Edwin C. Dinwiddie, who managed the campaign for the passage of the enforcement code for the Anti-Saloon League and allied temperance organizations, said:

"I regret that the President saw fit to veto a well-considered code to enforce a national law which he himself approved last November, but the veto was not wholly unexpected. The prompt and decisive vote of over three to one by which the House has just overridden the Presidential veto is in line with the overwhelming sentiment of the country, which demanded and finally secured the enactment of national prohibition.

"There is not the slightest doubt about the Senate's passing the bill over the veto by a substantial majority. I anticipate a vote of over three to one in the Senate also. I shall be surprised if the opposition registers over twenty-five votes in the Senate; I think twenty or twenty-one may be nearer their maximum strength."