

A TEST OF PROHIBITION.

Let the Census Officials Take a Plebiscite Next Year.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Believing that the present proposed disposition of the prohibition question is, not in any sense a settlement of it, and that the drastic legislation now about to be passed by Congress will only tend to encourage lawlessness and breed contempt for all laws, and believing that no question is ever settled until it is settled right, I am emboldened to make the following suggestion, in order to fairly test the sentiment of the country, to ascertain definitely and finally the sentiment of the country regarding the use of light wines and beers.

The coming year the decennial census will be taken, the Government at the same time collecting valuable statistical matter through a form of questionnaire. There would be little additional trouble or expense to add three or four more questions—to all those, say, aged 18 or over—which might be something like the following:

(1) Are you in favor of the use of light wines?

(2) Are you in favor of the use of beer?

(3) Are you in favor of the use of spirituous liquors for home or family use?

(4) Are you in favor of saloons strictly regulated?

(5) Are you in favor of a non-treating law?

Doubtless better questions might be propounded, but the information so secured would be extremely valuable and informative to show the sentiment and wishes of the country. None could reasonably object to the adding of these questions, unless they feared the result would prove their own views wrong. Naturally some penalty should be provided for those census enumerators who either tried to lead or influence answers in any direction, as what is wanted is a fair and honest expression as to the wishes of the majority of the people of this country, which opportunity has heretofore been denied them.

AUG. S. GUILLOT.

Dallas, Texas, July 19, 1919.

SHANTUNG AN INDUSTRIAL PRIZE.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

There seems to have been some avoidance of going into details, or perhaps only a general lack of information, concerning the industrial aspects of the Province of Shantung. This promontory and province contains four important coal fields, several important iron deposits, and an abundance of coolie labor. The German railroad concession covers the entire province and is an exclusive one. No other lines can be built to tap the coal or iron deposits. The mining concession covers the entire province and is also exclusive.

The province is the most densely populated portion of China. The struggle for mere existence is keen. Day wages are on the literal basis of a "living wage," practically the equivalent of a handful of dry rice a day. Heretofore Japan has somewhat lacked coal and iron, but she is now supplied with what has been called "the cheapest coal and iron in the world." Their possession raises her from the position of a local power to that of a dominating Pacific power. It is said that there is an official report in a Washington department on the mineral resources of Shantung. If the League of Nations is adopted, and if it safely guarantees to all profound peace through an indefinite future, then one can but feel that the peaceful development of her arts and manufactures thus afforded Japan is matter of general gratification—the Chinese possibly excepted.

CHARLES STEWART DAVISON.

New York, July 25, 1919.

THE CHICAGO AIRSHIP DISASTER.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

I still have to think of that terrible aero accident of Chicago. Of course, an accident is an accident, and, rightfully speaking, should be pardoned. This one, however, like the several others that did not terminate in quite such disaster, was avoidable.

An airship, whether of this dirigible type "blimp" or not, should not be permitted to circle over a city just to "show off" by doing something spectacular. Airplanes are not yet sure, and airmen are not yet experienced enough to make safety in this field a positive thing.

OLGA ROSENBERG.

Edgemere, N. Y., July 22, 1919.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Shall New York wait for an accident from an airplane or a "blimp," such as just shocked Chicago, before passing such an ordinance as Chicago now proposes to prevent overhead aeronautics?

ROBERT GRIMSHAW.

New York, July 22, 1919.