In view of the widespread interest attracted by the report of the Research Department of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America on the Prohibition situation, and of the serious misunderstandings which have arisen in connection with that report, the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council, composed of representatives of the Church bodies which are members of the Council, has authorized the following statement of its conviction as to principle and policy.

First of all, the Committee would emphasize its unequivocal support of National Prohibition, as expressed in many public utterances and reaffirmed by the Quadrennial Session of the whole Council in Atlanta last December. We declare our strong conviction that the policy of prohibition is the deliberately and permanently established policy of this nation, that this policy has not failed, but, on the contrary, has already yielded results which fully justify its adoption, that the liquor traffic and the saloon must not come back again, and that the Churches must set themselves with new purpose to see that prohibition is enforced by law and sustained by the national conscience.

The statement adopted by the Federal Council in December, 1924, as the authoritative expression of its attitude toward the prohibition amendment, declares that "the effect upon the physical, economic, social and moral life of the nation of the extraordinary effort of society to protect itself from the liquor traffic has been so
beneficial that it is now generally agreed that the law will stand, based as it is upon the unassailable purpose ‘to promote the general welfare.’ The present-day duty of the moral citizenship of the nation we believe to be:

“1. To magnify the value of the principle of total abstinence and the obligation upon the law-abiding citizens to practise the same;

“2. To make unmistakably clear to both the lawless sellers and the lawless buyers of intoxicants that the liquor traffic has been permanently outlawed in the United States as the enemy of society;

“3. To urge local, state and federal governments to cooperate with increased vigor against the present organized resistance to the Prohibition Law until as adequate an enforcement of that law has been secured as of any other social legislation.”

The Administrative Committee of the Federal Council has seen nothing in the report of the Research Department to justify any modification whatever of the position thus taken by the Council on the prohibition issue. The policy of National Prohibition, as the report shows, was adopted by the American people by the overwhelming votes of their elected legislative assemblies. This policy has been reaffirmed by increasing majorities wherever it has been challenged.

We would remind those otherwise good citizens, who by their personal example and public utterances are lending countenance to those who violate their country’s laws, of the reasons which led to the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment. It rests upon three fundamental considerations: First, the belief that in dealing with gigantic social evils like disease or crime, individual liberty must be surrendered in the interest of effective social control; second, the belief that the liquor traffic is such an evil—a conviction which is gaining strength all over the world, and which has recently found official expression in the report of the Special Commission on Drink of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm; third, the experience gained by a generation of experiment with substitutes, which has led the ad-
vocates of temperance to conclude that only drastic federal action could bring about the eradication of the evils they were fighting. Prohibition was not a policy adopted hastily or without due consideration, and it is not to be set aside merely because great difficulty or even temporary reverses are encountered in carrying it out.

The report makes clear the remarkable social gains which followed under the adoption of prohibition; a lowering of the death-rate from alcoholic disease, a remarkable lessening of dependency due to alcoholism, a great reduction in drunkenness, and other results of a socially desirable sort. It also calls attention to the part undoubtedly played by prohibition in improving business and economic conditions, and, above all, points out the indisputable advantage gained by the abolition of the saloon. At the same time, the report reminds us that National Prohibition has not yet been given a fair opportunity to vindicate its full value to the physical, economic, social and moral life of the nation and calls attention to serious dangers to which it is at present exposed.

The Federal Council gratefully recognizes the splendid service which has been rendered by the agencies especially authorized by the Churches which, for many decades, have labored persistently and effectively to secure the adoption and the maintenance of prohibition. The Council pledges its active cooperation with all agencies which are ready to make a sustained and constructive effort to uphold the prohibition régime in order that there may be a conclusive demonstration of its merit as a national policy. It urges the friends of prohibition in other countries not to be deceived by the attempts which have been made by opponents of prohibition to interpret the report as a confession of failure or even of discouragement on the part of the Federal Council or of its constituent Church bodies.

The Federal Council calls upon the Churches to undertake a renewed moral crusade to strengthen the hands of those who are responsible for prohibition enforcement, and, in particular, to give a greater measure of moral support to the newly reorganized activities of the Fed-
eral Government. It urges upon all citizens who believe in prohibition the necessity of supporting the law by an irresistible volume of public opinion. Of those who may be out of sympathy with prohibition as a social measure, or who question the wisdom of the particular method by which it was adopted, it asks voluntary compliance with the law in the interest of orderly government and in order that the policy it represents may be adequately tried. It appeals for a new measure of fair-mindedness and good will on the part of all in connection with this vitally important issue in order that the outcome of the great moral effort may be determined by reason rather than by prejudice and self-interest.

Especially does the Federal Council urge upon the Churches the necessity for a more adequate program of education on the moral issues involved in the liquor traffic. We strongly emphasize the need for a far greater attention to this problem in the Church's program of religious education. In the last analysis, law depends for its support upon the public opinion which sustains it and the conscience of those who live under it.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that legislation can relieve us of the necessity of training our youth in habits of temperate living, self-control, and the practice of Christian citizenship. To foster such habits and to cultivate such practice is the special and peculiar responsibility of the Church, to be ignored only at the peril of the nation.

It is our hope and confidence that the report of the Research Department on the prohibition situation, calling attention as it does to the real dangers with which we are confronted, will stir the Churches to a renewed sense of their responsibility, not only for the enforcement of the Prohibition Law, but also for rallying the conscience of the nation to its support.

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