

RULING SOUGHT TO PROSECUTE RUM BUYERS

10/17/19
WASHINGTON, Oct. 17.—Attorney-General Mitchel will be asked for an opinion on whether the Government can prosecute liquor buyers under the Volstead Act, Senator Sheppard (D), of Texas, announced.

Should the Attorney-General rule in the affirmative, Sheppard will demand an immediate campaign against the buyers, he said.

Meanwhile, Sheppard will press his proposed amendment to the Volstead Act to make doubtly clear that purchases may be prosecuted.

DRYS SPLIT ON ISSUE.

Sheppard does not have the united support of the prohibitionists, in or out of Congress. Many of them believe the proposal is so drastic it will cause unfavorable reaction.

The group headed by Bishop James Cannon, Jr., is vigorously supporting such a proposal, while the Anti-Saloon League, as revealed by F. Scott McBride, superintendent, in a speech at Norristown, Pa., regards it as "needless."

"No one can escape the proposition that the buyer of intoxicating liquor is equally guilty with the seller, if the liquor traffic is to be considered a crime," said Senator Sheppard.

PRESENT LAW HANDICAP.

"As long as people of standing and influence and wealth, many of them supporters of the prohibition law in public, although violators of it in private, may continue legally to purchase beverage alcohol, prohibition will be handicapped.

"The moment they are branded as lawbreakers, half or more than half of them will stop buying. The bootleg market will have received a staggering blow and will begin to decline. The net result will be a diminution of offenses before the courts."

SEES LEGAL LOOPHOLE.

Answering claims that it would be unconstitutional to prohibit liquor buying, Sheppard said:

"The fact that the purchaser is not mentioned in the Eighteenth Amendment does not make a law prohibiting purchase unconstitutional. It is well established that Congress may enact any measure reasonably necessary to carry out an 'admitted purpose of the Constitution.'"