

CHECKING COMMERCIALIZED VICE IN KANSAS CITY

April 15, 1921

This folder gives the present favorable outlook for subduing commercialized prostitution in Kansas City. For more than seven years the Society for Suppression of Commercialized Vice has maintained its warfare against vice under adverse conditions. The present situation is most favorable for a better Kansas City.

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BETTER TIMES AHEAD

Kansas City is undergoing a moral house cleaning. Vice is greatly reduced. Officers of the law are doing their duty. There is no indication of favoritism. Policemen now have orders to bring in *all* law violators.

The Injunction and Abatement bill which the Society for Suppression of Commercialized Vice has urged four successive legislatures to pass is now a law. As a record of change of sentiment toward moral measures, the bill passed both houses of the legislature without a dissenting vote. Our former attorney, W. B. Brown, is now first assistant to the prosecuting attorney and the injunction and abatement law will be used whenever necessary.

The United States Inter-Departmental Board on social hygiene has assigned Mr. R. S. Hudson as their representative in Kansas City. The Missouri State Board of Health is combatting social diseases under the leadership of Dr. R. L. Russell. Kansas City's health director, Dr. E. H. Bullock, is co-operating with the state and federal departments. It is hoped that the present appropriations will be continued and that a permanent and systematic campaign of health education will be conducted in Kansas City.

Our Society is co-operating with the Law Enforcement Association in the suppression of vice. The service we have been able to render the Association is indicated in the following letter:

Law Enforcement Association of Kansas City,
Missouri
701 Republic Building
February 1, 1921.

Mr. Nat Spencer,
City.

My dear Mr. Spencer,

I am obliged for your thorough investigation and good report on the case, which came to me this morning.

Another matter has come before us which seems to merit investigation and I will be further in your debt if you can have this examined into by your investigator.

The place in question is

No said to be operated by etc.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) WARD C. GIFFORD.

Executive Secretary.

"What are you going to do with the women?" has been the perennial query in connection with closing

bawdy houses. The fact that prostitutes almost invariably refuse the help that is offered does not wholly answer the question. The subject is now being considered by the Correctional Division of the Social Service League and a specific rehabilitation program will shortly be recommended not only for prostitutes but for all Kansas City's human wreckage that has been collected by our welfare and penal institutions.

But the underworld does not yet believe that the present cleanup is to be a permanent affair. As in other periods of law enforcement they have gone into hiding with the expectation that the storm will blow over in a few weeks. "It always has," they argue, "and it will do so again." Visitors at old time resorts are told that there is nothing doing now but "come back in a couple of weeks." Annie Chambers is hopeful but admits that unless the police relax their vigilance her "business" is ruined.

Heretofore the Society for Suppression of Commercialized Vice has always been handicapped by working under adverse conditions. Now the way is clear for results. With a police force that gives genuine support, with the operation of the Injunction and Abatement law, with strong support of the county prosecutor's office, with the assistance of the federal and state departments, with hearty cooperation of the Law Enforcement Association, and perhaps above all an enlightened and sympathetic public sentiment, there is every reason to hope that Kansas City will become one of the cleanest of American cities.

THE MISSOURI INJUNCTION AND ABATEMENT ACT

By the 51st General Assembly, 1921

AN ACT

To enjoin and abate houses of lewdness, assignation

and prostitution; to declare the same to be nuisances; to enjoin the person or persons who conduct or maintain the same and the owner or agent of any building used for such purpose; and to assess a penalty against the person maintaining said nuisance and the ground, the building and owner thereof.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section 1. That any person or persons or corporation who shall directly or indirectly establish, keep, permit or maintain any bawdy house, assignation house, or place of prostitution in this state shall in addition to other penalties prescribed by the laws of the state of Missouri be deemed guilty of a nuisance, and all buildings, erections, rooms and places, and the ground itself in or upon which such bawdy house, assignation house, or place of prostitution is conducted, permitted, carried on, maintained or continued are also declared nuisances, and all such nuisances shall be enjoined and abated as herein provided.

Sec. 2. The attorney-general or prosecuting attorney of any county in this state where any such nuisance as defined in section 1 of this act, exists, is kept, permitted or maintained may prosecute a suit in equity to abate and perpetually enjoin the same. All such suits shall be instituted in the name of the state of Missouri at the relation of the attorney-general or prosecuting attorney of the county, as the case may be, provided; any individual may prosecute such suit at the relation of the state of Missouri to his use, but in cases so instituted by an individual or individuals, bonds or securities for costs may be required as in other cases. All persons, whether owners, lessees, officers, agents, inmates or employees, aiding, assisting or abetting in the commission of any such nuisance may be made parties defendant in any such cases. The circuit courts of this state are hereby authorized and empowered to try and determine all cases arising under this act and shall have power to enforce injunctions under this act by such measures and means as are now or may hereafter be provided for the enforcement of injunctions in this state, and in abating any such nuisance may order such house, structure, building or place closed for a reasonable length of time as it seems just and wise to the court.