

KANSAS CITY

Anti-Vice Society

INCORPORATED, 1913

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REPORT OF SECRETARY

FOR OCTOBER 31, 1937

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE
ANTI-VICE SOCIETY, FOR THE YEAR
ENDING OCTOBER 31, 1937

I have lived in Kansas City for more than thirty years. During the greater part of that time I have had more than ordinary opportunities to know about the moral conditions in Kansas City. It is my candid conviction that at no time within my personal knowledge have we had such a wide-open town as at present. Gambling, vice and liquor are under little or no official control.

GAMBLING

Formerly, the large gambling places down town had guards who scrutinized the credentials of their customers before they were allowed to enter. But such precautions are not now regarded as necessary. The places are wide open and any one may enter without fear of raids or arrests.

Eye-witnesses describe a gambling place at 39th and Main Streets and told of the afternoon attendance of 75 persons and an evening-attendance of a hundred people, more than one-half of whom were women. The place is about two blocks from the Westport High School and from the Junior Westport High School and on the street traveled by the greatest number of the thousands of boys and girls who attend these fine schools.

At 31st and Troost, a similar gambling institution is in full and open operation. A recent report states that extensive gambling operations are conducted at the Isis Theater.

Race track gambling is reduced in Kansas City, while the Riverside Racing Events are in progress.

The inference is that persons high in political influence have the Kansas City gamblers "cracked down on" so as to locate as much of the gambling profits as possible at Riverside.

LIQUOR

A second element in the Kansas City situation is the violation of the liquor laws. Attorney General Roy McKittrick is reported to have said that "Liquor enforcement in Missouri is terrible." Notwithstanding the promise that we should have nothing like the old-fashioned saloon, that is just what Kansas City has. A "saloon is a place where intoxicating liquor is sold and drunk." There are approximately 600 such places in Kansas City. Before prohibition, there were about 600 legalized saloons. Considering the law enforcement of liquor sales regulation, the increased amount of liquors used by women, and the prevalent letting down of liquor bars in social functions, it is probable that there is much more liquor now consumed in Kansas City than in pre-prohibition days.

The use of liquor by automobile drivers furnishes a most serious situation. Even the liquor trade is now urging its patrons not to use liquor before driving. They commend the slogans "If you drive, don't drink," and "If you drink, don't drive." The sale of liquor by the package aggravates this situation, as most of the sales to automobile drivers are in packages.

Some saloons are closed on Sunday, but many are not. Some are said to open about 2 o'clock in the afternoon in order not to interfere with church attendance in the forenoon. Screens at the saloons are contrary to our city ordinance which says: "No

obstruction, swinging doors, window shades or drapes, closed rooms or screened partitions, shall be maintained on the premises so that the customers shall be open to view." Most saloons have no screens.

VICE

The vice situation in Kansas City is notoriously free from control. The prosecuting attorney refuses to use the most effective weapon against prostitution, the Injunction and Abatement Law. The police department make no effective movement to reduce the activities of prostitutes. Public solicitation by calling, gesticulation, window rapping, etc., are very common. Several sections of the city are now practically red-light districts. A recent partial survey revealed 40 immoral houses in full operation. These places have been -reported to the police many times with very meager results. A very regrettable feature of the vice situation is the presence of women in the saloons. Women of the street take advantage of their "legal rights" and loiter about the saloons to work up their trade. They may purchase liquors at the bar for themselves and often urge men to buy liquor for them. This enables them to make their desired contacts which are frequently followed by visits to nearby rooms. The lower classes of saloon keepers favor this prostitution solicitation, as it gives them additional profit. Service at the bar by women attendants is common.

Several prostitute areas are not far from each other. They are located mostly in poor residential districts but are also in a much traveled business locality leading to the city market. Quoting from the report to the director of police: "Some evenings ago a party drove through these districts and reported a

seemingly solid section of depravity and was horrified at the situation presented.”

Many of the numerous night clubs are rendezvous for prostitutes. Some are performing entertainers and others mingle with the guests and attract men companions. The night club trade has injured the burlesque house business. Seventy-two night clubs are listed in the telephone directory and many advertise their entertainment and drinking features in the daily press.

FRAUDULENT ELECTIONS

The strangle-hold of the underworld in Kansas City has been maintained through fraudulent elections. The conviction of election officials and their sentences to the U. S. penitentiary will very favorably affect the situation. The appointment by Governor Stark of a highly satisfactory board of election commissioners is very favorable to a genuine clean-up of bad conditions which have prevailed in Kansas City for many years. Additional indictments by the grand jury are forthcoming. Seventy-three indicted persons await trials. The outlook for law enforcement in Kansas City is now the best in years and we can take renewed courage for a cleaner Kansas City.

The Anti-Vice Society finds encouragement in the increasing number of persons interested in the subjugation of vice and in educational work for combatting its ill effects.

Very truly yours,

NAT SPENCER, Secretary