

306 Trust Building

Report on Fort Worth.

Conditions here are more appalling than anywhere we have yet done intensive work. Prostitutes are flocking to the town from the ends of the earth, it seems. Men from Chicago have seen some from that city; a medical man from El Paso has seen five from there whom he had treated for venereal disease. The boys just up from the Border say the ones from down there came on the next or prior trains; and hundreds of young girls apparently are street walking and soliciting openly on the most public and popular streets in the town. Mrs. Speer called me to Fort Worth in order that I, as well as she, might bear "eye witness" to our women of the disgrace of Texas; and though I am a novice at this sort of work, the things I saw openly on the streets of Fort Worth convinced me that when the city authorities claim to be unable to see anything, they are wilfully blind. There is no supervision of dance halls and amusement places.

Venereal disease at Camp Bowie is tremendously on the increase, in spite of the prophylactic treatment. In visiting the base hospital there, we explained to the surgeon in charge the purpose of our investigation, and the fact that we expected to report direct to you. He gave us these figures with the understanding that they go to you but not to the public. When Mrs. Speer made her first visit to the base hospital the per centage of venereally infected men there was a trifle over 33-1/3 per cent of the total number of patients. When we called together, less than ten days later, the percentage had risen to just a trifle under fifty per cent. The fact that the three kinds of venereal infection are prevalent indicates a very low type of prostitute, and we think points directly to the negro problem. Cannot prohibiting zones be established to keep the men out of the negro quarter?

The city officials say they are "doing everything possible," but plainly prefer to cover up rather than clean up. They have only two men on the so called "purity squad" to cover all Fort Worth, and have recently appointed one police woman, who, to our intense regret, we found to be both old and ignorant. The military police are carefully labeled M.P." in letters three inches high. Need I comment?

In interviewing the business men, Mrs. Speer found them almost to a man either opposed or indifferent to such "idealistic ideas" as a clean town. For instance, W. D. Paddock, President of the Rotary Club, said to her that Secretary Baker with his theories was quite far away; if the government really wanted these things done why did not these military men out at Camp Bowie come in and say so; that Fort Worth was doing everything in the world those men asked for, even making crooked roads straight; and he for one was not willing to take any step, or link himself up with any movement until he knew that those men wanted this thing. This interview is typical as to attitude, though none of the rest were so frank in expression.

The jitney and auto situation is as usual with no ordinance to cover. The park conditions are bad, though slightly improved, but the cemetery and a strip of woods near the camp have a very bad reputation.

We have had every cooperation from the U. S. District Attorney W. M. Odell. His varied duties have kept him out of the city for the past month almost continuously. Now that he has returned again, he will give this question his close attention. He is a man you can absolutely depend upon as far as is humanly possible.

Whiskey is carried into the camp by the soldiers themselves. They get it just about where they please; and there is much more drinking than many people seem to be informed of. If they cannot control it now, what will be the result when the numerous places from Dallas move over, with the element that will naturally follow? A great many saloons in Dallas have great hand painted signs on them, "Not going out of business but moving to such and such a number, Fort Worth." (Dallas, as you know, went dry on the twentieth of this month.)

The city officials are doing everything possible, but plainly it is not going to clean up. They have had to use the so called "quarantine squad" to go to the port of call, and have reported it appointed the police, and, to our intense regret, we found it to be all and ignorant. The military police are probably labeled "M.P." in letters three inches high. What is the result?

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