

Copy of Letter sent by Secretary of War Baker to
Mayors of all Cities and Towns in the neighbor-
hood of National Army Cantonments and
National Guard Camps.

"In anticipatipn of the military training camps soon to be opened in your neighborhood, I am sending forthwith a copy of the regulations recently issued on the question of the suppression of vice and the sale of alcohol to soldiers in uniform within a given radius of military posts and camps. Those regulations, which are based on sections 12 and 13 of the recent army law, do not, I believe, need comment, and I am confident that their enforcement will help create a wholesome environment about the military camps. There are one or two matters, however, in connection with the enforcement of the regulations to which I would like to call your attention. In the first place, the purpose pf these regulations is to put into effect sections 12 and 13 of the army law recently passed, so that the army itself can cooperate with the local authorities, if necessary, in their enforcement. The regulations do not in any way lessen the necessity for police vigilance on the part of local authorities. The presence of large bodies of troops rather increases the responsibility of those whose duty it is to preserve local order and I am confident that the War Department can rely on you to the utmost to see that the regulations are rigidly enforced .

"In the second place, while we have fixed a five-mile radius about the camp, in which vice is strictly to be put down, the War Department will not tolerate evil resorts of any kind within easy reach of the camp, even though such resorts lie without the five-mile zone . If places of bad repute spring up outside the five-mile limit, but fairly accessible to the camp, I shall not hesitate to insist upon their elimination. Of course, it would be possible to extend the zone and I shall not evade the responsibility in case of necessity. At the same time if the zone is drawn within too large a radius, there is danger that the number of soldiers required to police it will be beyond the ability of the commanding officer to furnish. In such case, therefore, it might be easier and cheaper to move the camp to a more desirable locality; provided, of course, that clean conditions could not be secured through any other course .

"Finally, let me say that the War Department will not tolerate the existence of any restricted district within an effective radius of the camp. Experience has proved that such districts in the vicinity of army camps, no matter how conducted, are inevitably attended by unhappy consequences. The only practical policy which presents itself in relation to this problem is the policy of absolute repression, and I am confident that in taking this course the War Department has placed itself in line with the best thought and practice which modern police experience has developed. This policy involves, of course, constant vigilance on the part of the police, not only in elimination of regular houses of bad repute, but in checking the more or less clandestine class that walk the streets and is apt to frequent lodging houses and hotels .

"I have appointed a commission on training camp activities to advise with me on matters of this kind, and through this commission I shall keep constantly in touch with conditions about all our army camps . If you have any questions relating to the enforcement of the enclosed regulations, I trust you will not hesitate to get in touch with me or with Raymond B. Fosdick, chairman of the commission. Meanwhile I am sure the country is looking to us to cooperate effectively in this matter and to make the surroundings of our camps worthy of the fine spirit of the Nation which entrusts these young men to us to be trained for service in a great cause."

TEXAS EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION
503 Trust Building
Galveston, Texas.

Dear Suffragist:

This is Conservation Bulletin No. 1, and you are not to throw it away as a circular. It is about the most important thing that has ever come knocking at your door asking your attention. And upon your receipt of this or similar information and your action on this matter will hinge the future destiny of our nation.

The Texas Equal Suffrage Association, in convention assembled, heard reports on conditions around camps in Texas, and ordered me as Chairman of a Committee for this purpose, to proceed at once to wage a vigorous campaign for clean moral conditions around these camps. Acting upon this order, I have done these things:

- First. Taken up the matter with the War Department.
- Second. Written to the Presbyterian Assembly meeting in Dallas, and the Southern Baptist Assembly meeting in New Orleans, asking cooperation.
- Third. Spoken to many women's meetings, and conferred with leading women in various parts of the state.
- Fourth. Called a meeting of women from all over the state, in San Antonio, for June fifth, (Registration Day,) to consider our plans and invite the cooperation of all women in our effort to make the war service of our men safe from unnecessary dangers.
- Fifth. Endeavored to raise money for this work, realizing that we are to go up against the organized vice interests, not only of Texas but of the North and East, - the strongest, best organized and best financed organization in the world. But in spite of this, we know that "right is might," and we cannot let our men face greater danger than an army with guns, without registering a protest, and a vigorous one at that. In this work, we believe every woman who can spare a five cent piece will spare it and finance this work.
- Sixth. Issued this bulletin to you asking you to do your part, which is right now this, -
 - A. Read this letter and bulletin through twice in order to master it fully.
 - B. Take it and go before every woman's organization in town and read it, asking for, -
 - a. An open discussion.
 - b. Letters to protest to the War Department from every individual there.
 - c. Money to carry on this work.
 - C. Report back to me what you have done, and if you desire fuller information ask for it.

Herein fail not if you love your country, for her future is at stake. If you love the Lone Star State, - for she is at present resting under the black cloud of having called the sons of the women of the whole country to protect her border, and then letting them suffer temptation, downfall, shame, misery, and in some cases death, from wholly unnecessary dangers.

Will not the Mothers of Texas pledge to the mothers of the nation freedom for their cleanly raised boys from this unnecessary evil while in our state?

Yours for a "white zone" around the concentration camps,

MINNIE FISHER CUNNINGHAM,

President.

CONSERVATION OF THE MANHOOD OF AMERICA AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON FUTURE GENERATIONS.

The word CONSERVATION has come to mean woman's part in this gigantic struggle. The responsibility of the success of this war has been laid upon the shoulders of the American woman. We are facing a time of absolute readjustment, facing a new sense of responsibility and cooperation that becomes personal to each of us. To be responsible for the outcome of the war, for the efficiency of our soldiers both at home and abroad, is the biggest call that has come to women in the whole world. In a short time there will not be a home in America that has not given some one near and dear before this war is over. Every home, every woman, will have sacrificed. We are willing that they should go, if the country needs them, but we are not willing for them to be put into training camps that are so immoral that if it should please God to bring them home to us from the war, they would be physical and moral wrecks.

"The most terrible waste of manhood in the modern warfare is not on the battlefield." In studying the experiences of the European nations at war and praying that we will have the intelligence to profit by their experience, I quote the French Government's report that three great enemies have reared their heads to threaten the existence of France, - alcoholism, tuberculosis and syphilis. That social hygiene has been brought to the highest point of prominence through the war, where the people realize the depth of seriousness to the nation is also brought out in this report. The British Royal Commission's report of April, 1916, on venereal diseases says that very serious conditions have been revealed, and asks the action of the Government as the only solution of the great national problem, intensified by war conditions.

No short sighted parsimony should be allowed to stand in the way of utilizing all means known to science and organization to protect future generations, upon which the national prosperity depends. That we have already been criminally careless, and have allowed conditions in Texas, at which every mother who has sent sons here to protect our border is filled with resentment, - for which every mother holds us responsible, - is shown by the following excerpts from report of Dr. M. J. Exner, a physician who has worked with the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A. both in Europe and in America. He is recognized as an authority by the American Social Hygiene Society; a man of international reputation; is recognized by the United States Government as an authority. His report is a statement of facts after a personal investigation of the Mexican border camps last year:

"It is a matter of history that prostitution follows the army. As soon as mobilization is called, mobilization of the commercialized vice interests is called, and either precedes or follows upon the heel of the army. Reliable facts at hand show that during the first eighteen months of war, one of the great powers of Europe had more men incapacitated for service by venereal disease contracted in mobilization camps than in all the fighting at the front."

Going back to the conditions in Texas:

"In a number of communities in the vicinity of which troops were located, not only were the existing prostitution facilities augmented, but new vice districts were hurriedly built. The environment of practically all the camps quickly became, if not already so, such as presented the severest temptations to immorality. We must take account of the fact that under such circumstances the soldier is subjected to unusual moral strain. The vast majority of the men, especially the national guards, are in their adolescent years, many of them mere boys. The period in which the developing love instinct, with its strong sexual element and driving desires, powerfully asserts itself. It is the period in which desire is strong and the will is weak. Again the man in uniform is a marked man. In civilian clothes he is one of the common mass. The uniform sets him off from the mass. A factor

which greatly enhances the moral strain upon the soldier is the process of leveling down to the lower element to which there is a powerful tendency in the military camp. Loneliness also contributes to the cause of immorality in the soldier. Nothing on the border impressed me more forcibly than the loneliness-in-the-crowd of many of the soldiers. I have seen hundreds of them walking the streets of border towns at night with the restlessness and gnawing of loneliness expressed in face and manner. Extensive prostitution in its worst form was accessible to all military camps on the border and in Mexico, in most cases easily accessible, with the exception of outposts and a few points. I will cite a few typical examples. In doing so, I shall indicate the communities by letter, in order to avoid seeming to attach undue blame to individual commanders. While many of the officers have not done what they should have done, and what they had authority to do to minimize the evil, blame for the bad conditions which have existed must rest largely on the civil authorities. However adequate and misdirected the efforts of the military authorities may have been, they at least did something, and while that did not lessen, for the most part, the practice of prostitution, it did keep venereal disease at a low rate. The communities, on the other hand, so far as I know, without exception, not only failed to cooperate adequately with military authorities in suppressing prostitution or making it inaccessible to the soldier, but many of them vigorously opposed such measures on the ground that it would hurt business, or for political reasons."

"Community A is a border town on the outskirts of which three military camps are located. In the town a district of white and Mexican women was situated in which prostitution was extensively practiced without restraint on the part of civil or military authorities. One house of seven women . . . catered to officers only. Most of the houses were unsanitary Mexican shacks, and in these the women were of very low grade. At many of these places men were observed to be standing in line to await their turn. Here, as at most other points, the district was 'regulated' by the military authorities. The regulation consisted of compulsory examination of the women on the average of once in two weeks. With the exception of three points, these regulations were not designed to restrict the practice of prostitution, but only in a measure to reduce its consequences and to avoid disturbances. In most places guards were stationed in the houses of prostitution for that purpose. That this sort of guard duty became thoroughly demoralizing to the guards goes without saying. In this place many saloons were run in defiance of a dry law, and in the evening were constantly crowded with soldiers, while stalled in an automobile by the roadside, one pay-day evening, I witnessed for an hour and a half a constant procession of drunken soldiers, reeling in the mud toward camp. A large proportion of them seemed to be mere boys."

(Communities B, C, D and E are omitted for sake of brevity.)

"These are typical of the whole border situation.

"What seems to me to have been the most inexcusable situation with reference to prostitution was found in connection with the troops in Mexico. At each of the two points where the main bodies of troops were located a prostitution district was maintained within the lines of the camp and supervised by military officers. When we consider that in these instances the military commanders had no established prostitution nor any complications with municipal authorities to deal with, and that the men were not allowed to enter Mexican communities, it is difficult to find any excuse for the situation. In these instances, prostitution was deliberately provided by the officers on the assumption that it was necessary for the contentment or the well-being of the men.

"Camp I was a large camp, located near two small towns. Here also prostitution and saloons sought to establish themselves. But the commander suppressed both, absolutely, with an iron hand and never relaxed his vigilance. As fast as any sources of prostitution or of the sale of intoxicants could be located, he got rid of them assuming the authority to do so when he did not technically possess it, on the ground of military efficiency. Prostitution was practically inaccessible to this large contingent of troops, except as a few men might secure leave to visit larger centers many miles away. At no other point were vice and drink so consistently and thoroughly suppressed.

"Now it will be of interest to inquire what has been the reaction of these representative measures on the men in this command. According to the arguments of many officers, in support of prostitution, we should expect extreme discontent, clamoring for prostitution facilities, revolt, mutiny. The facts are that no more contented, more orderly, better disciplined, better trained, more efficient, or more loyal body of troops could be found anywhere on the border. Many of them said to me with a ring of pride, 'Oh, we have a clean bunch here.' The feeling of group pride was everywhere conspicuous among the military units of this camp, and was in itself a great restraining influence. It was unique; I found it nowhere else.

"It is known that the Secretary of War at Washington was seriously concerned over the government's responsibility to the troops in this matter; that he made himself conversant with the facts, and that he made urgent recommendations and specific suggestions to the commanders of posts with reference to minimizing prostitution on the border, and that he gave them authority to change the location of their troops, if necessary, to accomplish that end. Had these recommendations been fully carried out, we should probably have come nearer to solving the prostitution problem on the border than has ever been done in relation to any army.

"The experience on the Mexican border shows that so long as the handling of the problem of prostitution, as it affects the army, is left to the discretion of the individual commanders, there can be no hope of a satisfactory solution. Their attitude is too varied, and their knowledge of the problem too backward. There is needed as clearly defined a policy of moral sanitation as the government has of physical sanitation, and that policy must be made effective in uniform procedure through military order from headquarters. The extent of the practice of prostitution is in direct ratio to its accessibility."

In October, 1916, the efforts of the Law Enforcement League of San Antonio to effect the closing of the recently established degregated district, and, the promise of the Mayor of San Antonio that those objectionable conditions has been in no degree carried out. We know that today San Antonio has 2400 prostitutes. "Prostitution in its relation to the army is a question with which the citizens of this country as a whole must fully concern themselves, for it is not likely that the army will proceed in advance of public opinion and demand."

"From the standpoint of military strength and efficiency, such waste is serious. From the standpoint of social wholesomeness it is more serious; for it means that not only will these men bring back into the social structure a vast volume of venereal disease to wreck the lives of innocent women and children, but they will bring back into it other influences, attitudes and practices which will destroy homes, cause misery and degenerate society."

"The more far-reaching evil is the state of mind and of character which lies back of it. The greatest evil to society results from the shattered ideals, lowered standards, sensualized minds, and perverted practices which are brought into home life and society by these men, who represent in large measure the cream of the young manhood of the nation. To safeguard the home and society against these basic evils, we must not only abolish venereal disease, but we must minimize, so far as possible, prostitution itself."

Experience has taught us that Secretary Baker's recommendations or the promise of any civil authority to be effective will have to be followed up by the Mothers of Texas.

(Mrs.) ELIZABETH M. SPEER,

CHIEF DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, TEXAS