

Vice and Drugs in Montreal

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MR. PRESIDENT, and members of the Canadian Club—I must first apologize for having written out beforehand what I have to say to you to-day. This has been done deliberately, for I intend to make certain statements and some accusations that will undoubtedly be challenged, and I hope may form the basis of a public scandal, and failing that a sincere awakening of public opinion in this city, and also because I am inclined to be impetuous, and in the heat of my earnestness to-day I must avoid being carried away at a tangent and making the slightest exaggeration of facts that are almost unbelievable in this so-called civilized country and this community in particular. Business conditions during the last two years have caused the members of this Club grave concern. It has been the topic of several speakers that have appeared before you, but there are two lines of business that have not suffered—the drug traffic and commercialized vice.

Approximately ten times out of ten in cases where municipal officials are accused of laxity, negligence, or graft, in connection with the drug menace or commercialized vice, they throw out as a smoke screen an appeal to civic pride. This consists first of a denial that the vice exists, and second of a plea that the group making the accusations are “smirching” the fair name of our city. Even after an under-cover investigation demonstrates the activity of the exploiters many complacent citizens who do not come into direct contact with the vicious conditions, take sides with the officials, and agree that the skeleton, if there be one, might best be left in the cupboard.

For the past thirty years there has been a steady increase in the number of those addicted to dangerous drugs. This increase has been so rapid of late years that it is causing grave concern to all who have studied it, or who have come into contact with its inevitable results—crime. Reliable statistics have not been prepared as yet as to the numbers of addicts in Canada, but in those places where statistics are being gathered the results are most pessimistic. The seriousness of the situation in Montreal was brought home most forcibly during the past year to the management of the Montreal General Hospital, for during that period 128 cases of narcotic poisoning were admitted to the emergency department, and of these 14 died, in spite of the efficient and at times drastic treatment meted out to these patients. Mark you, these 128 cases were all brought in unconscious, due to an overdose, and give no estimate of the numbers of addicts taking drugs, although court house officials estimate that for the past year 1922, approximately 1,000 cases of violation of the Narcotic Drug Laws will be dealt with. In 1921 there were 552 cases in Montreal. In Vancouver for 1921 there were 858 convictions as against 293 for 1918. In 1921 the Federal Government prosecuted 23 doctors, 11 druggists, 4 veterinary surgeons, 165 illicit dealers, 634 Chinamen—a total of 835. These do not include provincial or municipal convictions. Dr. Amyot, Deputy Minister of Public Health at Ottawa, recently stated that Canada has between 12,000 and 15,000 drug addicts. Judge Emily Murphy, in her book, "The Black Candle," estimates that in Canada and the United States there are 2,000,000 addicts.

It might be interesting to you if at this time I enumerate and briefly describe those drugs which cause addiction: 1. *Opium* is the dried exudate obtained by incising the capsules of a poppy grown chiefly in the East, and Far East. It contains 9 per cent morphine and 3 per cent. codein. Opium is smoked and its effect is to produce forgetfulness and a period of tranquility. It excites the senses, and through its medium the seduction of women becomes easy. The sleep produced by smoking opium is a long one, but the awakening is most unpleasant, being accompanied by a head that knows how to ache, no appetite, and a tongue that is properly furred. Opium smokers are seldom violent. They are clannish, and at their orgies prefer company. 2. *Morphine* is an alkaloid of opium, and is used by means of hypodermic syringe. The widespread belief that morphine brings about an uncanny mental condition, accompanied by fantastic ideas, dreams and what not, is wrong. It does allay pain, and produces a feeling of well being.

Under its influence ideas seem to flow freely. The very action of morphine works toward the establishment of a habit, and is the most difficult of all narcotic habits to break. An hypodermic injection of any kind should only be given with strict surgical cleanliness and yet, one finds among morphine habitues a lack of this knowledge, and this promiscuous use of the hypodermic needle is attended with serious results from an infected solution or a dirty needle. It is not uncommon for them to insert the needle into their arms without even rolling up their sleeves. This almost always results in the formation of abscesses. I call to mind one girl of 22 that was brought into the hospital this summer from a Toronto train. She had evidently taken an overdose for she was unconscious, and when the nurse had prepared her for bed, her body was found to be covered with recent abscesses, and the scars of many old ones. Hers was a sorry tale—bad associates—taught to use morphine, and in order to procure the drug she became a prostitute, and had gone to Toronto at the Exhibition time to ply her trade. Her capital when she was brought into the hospital consisted of a small bag in which was a few cents, a hypodermic syringe and several cigarette butts. She admitted to me that colour and race were not discriminated against in her clientelle. The extremes to which addicts to morphine will go in administering the drug to themselves are almost unbelievable. Several cases have come under my observation where, lacking a hypodermic syringe, a small incision was made in the skin, and the drug solution injected therein with an ordinary medicine dropper. 3. *Heroin* is obtained by treating morphine with acetic acid. It is three times as strong as morphine, and its addicts are possessed of a much greater desire to pass the habit on to others. 4. *Cocaine* is obtained from the leaves of the South American cocoa plant. It is used by itself, and as an adjunct to morphine. Unlike morphine it is sniffed up the nose in the form of a white powder, and for that reason is much more handy for its users. The addicts of cocaine are called snow birds, while the drug itself goes under the name of coke, happy dust, snow. It is peddled in small paper packages which are called decks. These may contain from one to many grains. Its action on the human organisms is quite different to that of opium, and its derivatives, that of cocaine being mental, while that of opium is physical.

While it is safe to say that the majority of the users of narcotic drugs inhabit the underworld, one cannot lose sight of the fact that it has found its way into every class of society.

Very often this habit is begun through curiosity on the recommendation of some friend who is an habitue, or it may be a legacy left by a careless physician. I am sorry to say that in that noble profession there are physicians who get into a rut and prescribe narcotics under a host of trifling indications, and to go still further, there is unfortunately a small percentage of medical men who are addicts themselves. Bad associations, a desire to speed up one's working powers, and the ignorance of practically all laymen of what narcotic addiction is, are no doubt the main factors in the appalling increase in this condition. A single drug user in a community should be considered a menace to the whole of it, because of their insane desire to pass the habit on.

One hears a great deal regarding prohibition and its relation to the increase in drug addiction. The opinions on this subject are as numerous as the sands of the seas. I personally think, after a careful study of the situation, that there is very little connection between the use of alcohol and the use of drugs. One thing we are sure of, and that is, that drug addicts are seldom alcoholics, and also that drug addiction has gone on quite irrespective of the existing liquor laws in countries and cities elsewhere. The average age of drug addicts is between 16 and 25—one seldom sees as a confirmed alcoholic one so young. There are very few drug addicts over 40 which seems to be about the proper age for labelling a person an alcoholic.

Our Federal Government will report to you that they now control the legitimate importation of narcotic drugs into Canada. They do, and very capably, too, but they do not control the supplies brought in by drug rings, which supply is many times the amount brought in for legitimate purposes. Drug rings are international, national and municipal. It has been said that Germany is unloading, at great profit, large stocks of narcotic drugs; that Japan is the middle man—although the Japanese as a nation, are not drug users. Whether these facts are correct or not, we do know that large quantities of narcotics are being smuggled into Canada and the United States. Dock workers, porters on trains, sailors, crooked revenue officers and others, all combine to smooth the way. A book could be written of the methods adopted by the smugglers. According to court house officials of Montreal, over \$1,000,000.00 worth of morphine, cocaine, opium and heroin were smuggled into this city last year, and disposed of. Something like \$200,000.00 worth was recovered. One reads in the daily press of frequent raids on hotels, etc., in New York, and as much as \$520,000.00 worth has been found in one raid. Writing of this matter

one Canadian high in official circles, said lately that "It should be remembered that while Montreal is almost the worst city in Canada in this respect, it is owing to the geographical location. Being a seaport in addition to being a terminus of nearly all Canadian and United States railways, and within 35 miles of the American border with the best of highways connecting it up with the large United States cities, and being the largest city in Canada it is the national rendezvous for these large drug rings and crooks." "Birds of a feather flock together." Members of the underworld from all over the United States and Canada, make Montreal their headquarters for carrying on their illicit drug traffic. One instance in particular stands out in my mind which you will no doubt remember. A Mrs. Bruce and a Miss Wardell, age 21, were found unconscious on the Montreal express near New York city, suffering from overdoses of heroin. The Wardell girl died on the way to the hospital, according to the police. Mrs. Bruce said, "We fell into the hands of a crowd of drug smugglers in New York and Montreal who got us under their control with drugs and used us for their own purposes. We both carried drugs in suitcases between Montreal and Boston, and made much money for the men. Dorothea's man was very rich and used to let her wear his diamonds sometimes." These statements were corroborated by the police for the Wardell girl had been arrested in Syracuse with two suit cases full of drugs and wearing \$35,000.00 worth of diamonds.

One has only to read in a Montreal paper to realize that there are hundreds of small peddlers in this city, and that they do a very thriving business. An ounce of cocaine can be purchased for \$20.00, which is divided into 500 decks and retailed at \$1.00 a deck. Provided the peddler is honest he only makes by this transaction 2,500 per cent. But we would not look for honesty in anybody that would prey thusly on human frailties. The original ounce is generally diluted and mixed with boracic acid, chalk, etc., and instead of a paltry 2,500 per cent., they make 5,000 per cent. When one considers the profit in a business like this, one wonders why judges persist in punishing by a fine. The usual hang outs for these peddlers are in cafes, especially the all night restaurants, night clubs, dance halls, and Montreal has seen fit to provide plenty of these hang outs, in order that one desirous of partaking in this pastime may not be put to too much inconvenience.

One seldom hears of those high up in this business succumbing to the law. They keep well in the background and reap dividends

on their original investment that would make the ordinary banker or financial man's mouth water.

An addict will need from \$3.00 to \$30.00 worth of drugs a day. The mere fact of their addiction makes them irresponsible as wage earners. Men supply their own needs by stealing and women by prostitution. If an addict becomes a nuisance to his particular vendor, and cannot find the necessary funds to purchase his drug with, the peddler promptly plants a deck on him and gets him pinched. It reminds me of the old song, "If you haven't any money you needn't come around." But let a peddler get pinched and you will see many run to his rescue to pay his fine, especially is this true, if he happens to be an addict in addition, for they are mortally afraid that his drug may be cut off, and in order to get even a small shot he will squeal. One would like to feel that this would take place, but from articles that have appeared in the press this summer, the mere fact of being sent to jail does not mean withdrawing the drug. In fairness to the jail officials one should remark that it is also done elsewhere, and it is doubtful if it can be discontinued here under our present system.

A drug addict has little if any idea of right or wrong. Eighty-five per cent. of narcotic prisoners have criminal records. Heroin and cocaine are responsible for many of the violent crimes that take place in Montreal, and one can almost trace the incident of crime and drugs in this city. It has become quite noticeable that after each seizure of any size of drugs by the Federal police, please note that word Federal, that there is a marked increase in crime, hold-ups, burglaries, etc. This is due to the temporary shortage in the supply of drugs and a resulting increase in price.

If crime is the resulting evil of drug addiction in men, so also is prostitution the evil in women. It is only a short trip for a young girl from the most respectable home to a disorderly house. The usual route is as follows: stealing, Chinese cafes, cabarets, negro and Chinese opium joints, and last, but the surest of all, the disorderly house. You may remember that in the past year there have been several cases of deaths at so-called dope parties. The details of those parties were quite the most revolting exposures of the life of a section of our community, that one could dream of. It is not uncommon for parties of 8 to 14 men and women to gather in these disorderly houses and administer drugs to each other until a state of mind is arrived at that makes for degeneracy and immorality that is almost unbelievable.

One recorder stated on October 19th that this practice must

stop. His information was that most of the drug circulates through the medium of disorderly houses, and that he was going to stop it. In the *Star* of October 22nd, it states that disorderly houses have become the special mark of the raiders who have learned that they generally offer to the trafficker the most fertile field for vending drugs, and the recorders have warned disorderly house-keepers that in future they will be arrested if it is found that they have knowingly permitted a drug ghoul to operate on their premises. You could be pardoned if, after these two statements you should burst out laughing, for I can assure you it is well worth a laugh, and until we loose the strangle hold of the prostitute on our populace we can never hope to make any marked progress in staying venereal diseases and drug addictions.

It isn't vice that is so alluring, it is the mystery we make of it, and one does not go far in fighting this traffic until one meets with opposition, treachery, threats and serious menace, because they fear publicity.

I hope I have convinced you that there is a drug menace. If I have, what are we going to do about it? The most obvious thing would appear to be by law, or should I not say, by law enforcement. The Dominion Government has passed a Narcotic Drug Act, which as a Dominion measure, is excellent, and I might add, in the hands of a very capable Health Department at Ottawa. Thanks to some of the clauses of the British North America Act this law is of little practical value in the hands of provincial and municipal officials. It is therefore quite obvious that we should have provincial laws to govern this traffic. Manitoba has passed laws for this purpose. Quebec, I am glad to say, is about to do the same thing, and I feel sure that the authorities will give great care to the drafting of this law because they will appreciate the difficulty in drafting such a law so that it cannot, in some way, be circumvented. Fines are not deterrents, prison preferably accompanied by the lash for all peddlers will undoubtedly help. A unification of police efforts, by that I mean a co-ordination of Federal, provincial and municipal police squads for narcotic purposes. Much can be accomplished by close co-operation between these forces. Fines only tax the trade, and the punishment to be of value should be preventive. One should not show mercy to the beast that will sell drugs illicitly.

Doctors and druggists who sell drugs for illegal purposes should have their licenses to practice revoked, if not for good, for sufficiently long to bear warning to others.

The Federal Government, through the Department of Health,

is able to control the importation of these drugs for legitimate purposes. At the third Assembly of the League of Nations held at Geneva in September, 1922, its commission brought in a report on the traffic in opium and dangerous drugs. Many countries have not yet ratified the opium convention of 1922. The commission observes that "so long as the dangerous drugs are produced in quantities exceeding the legitimate requirements, a great danger exists that the surplus will find its way into illegitimate channels. A control of production, so as to limit to the amount required for medical and legitimate purposes, will therefore be the most effectual way of putting a stop to the illicit traffic." Unfortunately for this plan, I have just heard that in Germany they have discovered methods of manufacturing cocaine from coal tar derivatives. If that is so, heaven help us.

Laws are to be enforced. Some of our so-called criminal lawyers' chief ability and duties seem to be to persuade the crook that he is earning his fee by protesting, cross-questioning, repeating, denying, forbidding, objecting and quoting. He wastes the court's time and money, and often by some legal technicality or quibble, frees the crook. Some day a judge is going to get mad and kill one of these shyster lawyers.

Let us now pass on to the question of dealing with the addict. I have been asked the question of why cure them at all if they nearly all slip back. There are several reasons why.

1. For the safety of the community.
2. For prevention of crime.
3. To save millions spent on drugs.
4. The money lost by thousands who will not work.
5. To impress on the Government who should pay the bills, the amount and necessity of stopping the traffic.

I will not burden you with the technicalities of the cure, but will outline those in use at the present time.

1. *Ambulatory or slow reduction cure.*—The principle of this method is to reduce the strength and amount of a drug, not allowing the patient to suffer, and making the weaning period as long as is necessary. This has practically no chance of success unless the patient is willing or forced to be confined under such conditions that he can be strictly controlled and supervised. In 1920 New York established a clinic for this treatment, and in nine months treated 7,464 addicts without a cure. This clinic became a rendezvous for peddlers who found a ready market for their illicit wares when the so-called minimum dose was arrived at.

2. *The sudden withdrawal method* consists in stopping the drug abruptly altogether from the start. This has been called cruel and dangerous. The suffering, it is true, is acute, and extends over a period of several days. But it is remarkable how they will then pick up, and 30 to 40 pounds increase in weight in a few weeks is not unusual. While undergoing treatment these patients will cheat at every turn. Their skill in concealing drugs is uncanny. I saw one patient this summer who had wrapped around each hairpin drugs in paper, the color of her hair, and by this method was able to deceive us for some time.

At the present time Montreal drug addicts are treated as prisoners, not as diseased people, and as such are sentenced to jail. All authorities are unanimous in agreeing that institutions properly staffed should be provided for the care of these addicts if for no other reason than to incarcerate one whose main desire in life is to bring others to that depth from which there is little hope of resurrection. But what hope have we in Montreal for such institutions when we cannot yet boast of a hospital for tuberculosis, a hospital for incurables, hospitals for venereal disease or homes for convalescents?

So many drug addicts have been sent to jail here that recently a number were sent to Quebec because our jails were full.

Drug addicts can be cured, but we are told that 90 per cent. slip back because we have no follow-up system. As a rule, the first person they meet on their release is a peddler who is always on the watch to grab an old customer, or make a new one. The longer supervision is extended after the habit has been broken, the better the chances are for a lasting cure.

There is no question about it prostitution must be ended, or perhaps I should say, commercialized vice must be ended if we are to make any inroads into the drug traffic,, for almost every prostitute uses narcotics and the majority are distributors. Let me read a few newspaper clippings from the Montreal press during the last year. "Another woman trafficker, Rose Valiquette, was sentenced to jail for 12 months for selling cocaine. The woman, a self-confessed vendor, was the victim of a raid on No. 130 Cadieux Street a week ago yesterday." "Trapped by the City Narcotic Squad with marked money in her purse at No. 135 Cadieux Street. Blanche Ouellette, woman drug trafficker, this morning told the recorder that the drugs belonged to her employer, now in Bordeaux jail. Her employer in this case being the pimp who lived off her girls"—or this—"How many times have you been condemned,"

asked the recorder who was told the woman had already admitted keeping a disorderly house, "Oh, I don't recall," said the prisoner,—or this—"Corperal Churchman in giving evidence yesterday afternoon, concluded his story of the arrest of Dr. R. St. Jacques, of 34 St. Andre Street, stated that the doctor had told him he sold the drug to the woman because she kept a disorderly house," or this—"After deliberating 15 minutes a jury in the court of King's Bench, late yesterday afternoon found Elie Lafortune guilty of manslaughter in connection with the death of Paul Rolland, 22 years of age, who died from a dose of morphine, administered in a disorderly house on St. Denis Street on January 18th last." (Read list of houses from card) and the joke of this whole thing is, that these houses are still open, and I can assure you doing well. There are many in this audience who are quite prepared to come forward in all earnestness, or in ignorance and enter into long arguments as to a city's policy regarding commercialized vice. They will say that prostitution has gone on for thousands of years and will continue to do so in spite of all we can do, or they will give one long argument, re toleration, segregation, licensing, and medical examinations. These arguments must be answered.

Tolerance deals with the vice and grows out of negligence and indifference. It results from an attitude of mind which fails to conceive of prostitution as more than the immorality of two willing individuals, and which neglects to take into account prostitution as involving physical and moral ruin to some, and ill-gotten gains to others. It exposes our police department to the inevitable dangers of bribery and corruption by the creation of an illegally privileged class for them to deal with. That a system of toleration exists here is amply borne out by the court records. Prior to the appointment of the last administrative commission it was quite the exception to hear of a disorderly house being raided. The Committee of Sixteen led by the late Dr. Symonds, after the expenditure of some \$25,000.00, presented facts and figures to this Commission, which led them to give orders to clean up this district. Only that commission can relate the many difficulties, some almost impassable, that they met with. However, in the last year of their reign 407 raids were made on disorderly houses, and in 1922 only something under 250 raids were made, not because they were disorderly houses, but because of drugs or liquor. One of the members of the Executive Council was asked to meet the Committee of Sixteen last Spring, and the situation laid plainly before him with a request that he would draw the attention of his colleagues

to the facts as presented to him. He was a most attentive listener, and an equally good promiser. Nothing has been done to date. The policy of the police department is not to make raids unless called upon to do so. I think this clearly demonstrates that toleration is the accepted policy of our civic officials.

Regulation deals with the woman. It is an attempt to mitigate the ends of prostitution while at the same time tolerating its existence. Regulation once operated in Europe with its emphasis on Public Health. Under systems of regulation it has been attempted to confine prostitutes to licensed brothels whose inmates are examined by public officials. I might say that public opinion in Europe has become increasingly hostile to this practice. Where registration of these women existed, it was found that not more than 1 to 8 registered. Medical examination sounds safe and for that reason appeals to the layman. In the first place it is comparatively easy for a reputable physician to examine a man and say that he has, or has not got venereal disease—with women it is a most difficult task, taking much time and care to say that a woman has not got venereal disease. That time and care is never given by officials. Let us say for example that Madam X. submits to a weekly examination and to-day is found free from venereal disease, to-night she has connection with Mr. B. who has venereal disease. She is now in a position to pass it on to all comers on the strength of her medical certificate which she exhibits with much pride. She continues to infect others until her next examination, and as a rule does so for months. We have a form of medical examination here in Montreal. These are medical certificates taken from prostitutes in this city. The story of their medical examination as they told them to me, was laughable. Still worse, is this certificate given by a Montreal medical man on April 10th, to Miss Gaby. It reads that this is to certify that I have examined to-day the Bearer and have found her free from all symptoms of venereal disease. Signed, and from the same doctor to the same girl two days later this bill for \$15.00 for giving one injection of 606, a treatment for syphilis. I wonder if this young woman showed this bill to her customers, as well the imitation bill of health.

You cannot get around this problem by medical examination. For a time all prostitutes gathered in in raids in Montreal had to produce a medical certificate when they came up for trial, but they soon found a way to beat that game. Two physicians in charge of the police department took charge of this task, and they did very fine work. The percentage of women diseased that these examina-

tions showed is appalling. 41 women were arrested for loitering on Windsor Street in the course of two hours one night, 38 of these women were diseased. Statistics show that 95 per cent. of women found in disorderly houses are diseased.

This system of medical examination received one very severe blow at the hands of a woman official who has since been dismissed by the city. In the course of her duties she developed the unfortunate habit of informing many women, before their cases were disposed of in the Court, the result of the medical examination. As a consequence, many women did not appear for their sentence, but sent other women to represent them. It is rumoured that she went direct to many houses and told the keepers in advance the result of these examinations. The keepers were only too pleased to appreciate her services. One keeper of a notorious resort in Cadiex Street the day before Christmas, purchased from her \$1,500.00 worth of kimonoas which she presented to the inmates of her house as a Christmas gift. Shortly after this became known to the city authorities she was dismissed. I hope I have buried that old argument of medical examination once and for all.

Segregation deals with the house. It is the policy of attempting to confine houses of prostitution to one or more localities, within which official action will not be taken provided the prescribed regulations are observed. It is the aggregation of debauchery for those addicted to prostitution. If segregation is a good policy for that why not segregate all the saloons in one district for those addicted to liquor?

It only advertises vice and most taxi drivers, cab drivers, and others find it a very convenient policy for their patrons. Segregation has corrupted police forces elsewhere. One incident that comes to my mind shows that Montreal is not entirely free from this corruption. There is a detective employed by the city now, who some time ago kept a car in a garage of this city and was known as its owner. The car actually belonged to the keeper of No. 61 City Hall Avenue. Her initials were on the door of it, and she was registered as the owner of the Automobile Bureau of Quebec. Here, again, is a strange coincidence—this detective was entered in the 'phone book as residing at No. 61 City Hall Avenue. Is it fair that we should favour segregation if by so doing we leave a poor innocent policeman or detective open to these temptations?

There is only one policy that is open to any decent thinking man and that is suppression of commercialized vice. I think we will all admit that what is ordinarily known as sexual immorality is almost

impossible to stop. The policy of permitting commercialized vice in a community has stimulated the illegal sale of liquor, increased crime and debaucheries, fostered sexual perversion and the so-called district is now the home of the drug addicts.

The person who suffers is the girl, not the madame who owns several houses and lives in style and comfort in the residential parts of the city. She drives in her limousine and shops at the best stores. Her general manager is the keeper and that most loathesome of all creatures, the pimp, supplies her with girls, off whom he lives. One seldom hears of the madame or the pimp being punished. It is always the unfortunate girl who is fined. The madame pays the fine and the girl peddles her wares twice as hard to pay it back. When the past administrative commission was making frequent raids it was not an uncommon sight to see 50 or so girls in the courts of a morning. There was always one citizen with PLENTY of money to bail them out. His business is selling cheap jewellery and clothes to the girls in these houses. It matters not whether they need them or not the madame decides they will have them, and at many times their actual value, she of course, getting her commission. If ever the public in this city wake up and stop this business, this poor chap will be in a bad way. Does the madame or the pimp look after these girls when they become so diseased that they are useless to them? Not much, they are then shipped into our hospitals and a new recruit is produced.

Not all these girls are in these houses by choice. Their own share of the profits is too small for that. I cannot help but feel that if a girl is leading an immoral life she should at least not be robbed in every direction and 75 per cent. of her earnings go to a pimp and a madame. I can assure you that the size of these receipts would astound you. This is the card obtained from a girl in a \$3.00 house at 3 a.m. on a Sunday morning. There are 11 girls in this house and she had served 16 men, making her receipts \$48.00 out of which she got \$8.00, or 50 cents per visitor. The Chinaman who did her laundry charged her double the regular price. The ice-man, milkman, etc., all took their toll from the girls through the keeper. When this girl's week was up she was lucky if she didn't owe the madame money. These are not isolated secrets picked out to amaze you. They are all known to our civic officials and can be verified by any of you at any time you care to visit the district. The owners of real estate in the district will be very annoyed at me if as a result of this address good should come of it, for theirs is not such an unhappy lot.

It is not at all unusual for these houses to rent for \$400.00 and \$500.00 a month provided they are used for disorderly houses and \$65.00 and \$75.00 a month if used for three or four poor families. One has only got to make a move to enforce the law and close these places to find how well supplied the district and its parasites, are with money. The Committee of Sixteen has tried, and believe me, we have found out.

It is a fact well known to the police and civic officials, that the red-light district of this city, owing to its segregated and tolerated nature, offers a harbour of refuge for crooks of all descriptions. Listen to one or two headings of press clippings, culled from hundreds that have appeared lately—"Stabbed 18 times yet lives." "Result of fight in disorderly house." "Assaulted, gagged and then robbed in house on City Hall Avenue." "Lured into house, beaten and robbed." Disorderly houses are hangouts and rendezvous for worst kind of criminals.

I have not touched yet on what is to me one of the most serious menaces of all. The appalling amount of venereal disease and its relation to commercialized vice. In the venereal disease clinic last year of the General Hospital alone, there were 31,850 visits made by men and women suffering from Gonorrhoea and Syphilis. By far the greatest percentage of these cases had their origin in disorderly houses. How could it be otherwise when we are told that 95 per cent. of prostitutes in disorderly houses are diseased, in spite of those pretty little certificates I have just shown you. Books have been written by eminent public health authorities in an attempt to bring home to you all the serious problem the world is facing from venereal disease and its results. Crowded asylums, unhappy homes, cripples, poverty, all tend to make this an economic problem that cannot much longer be handled with modesty or indifference. Let me cite one case that came to my attention to bear this out, for while it is a most serious one there are thousands like it. A man came to a city relief officer asking for relief because his rheumatism made him unable to work. He was sent to a hospital for examination, and was found to have syphilis not rheumatism, incidentally he had not contracted this from a seat in a public lavatory. The Social Worker attached to this clinic went to find out conditions of his family. She found first of all that his wife had syphilis contracted from him. There were seven children living. The eldest was blind and deaf. The next two children were both deaf and dumb. The fourth had a syphilitic bone condition, and was a cripple. The fifth was an idiot. The sixth was

mentally defective. The seventh was 12 months' old and gave a positive reaction for syphilis. In addition to this several children had died of syphilis, and there had been several miscarriages. This entire family was dependent on charity.

Our Provincial Government points with pride to its recently established venereal disease clinics. Last year in the neighborhood of \$80,000.00 was spent on treating venereal disease cases in this province, the most of it in Montreal, and this on treating symptoms, but little was spent on removing the cause—the disorderly house. I will tell you frankly that as long as commercialized prostitution is permitted, as it is here, we can never cure them as fast as they are being infected by this pest hole.

The attitude of our courts and the manner in which the laws are administered in this city in connection with commercialized vice, is most annoying and at times amusing.

These cases are brought into the recorder's court which works through two agencies, the police and the recorder's. The police should make the cases, but their policy is to tolerate them and they make cases only when ordered to do so by the administration.

There are two recorders presiding over the recorder's court, and their jurisdiction is two-fold. The original object of having a recorder's court was to bring before it petty cases where the amount did not exceed \$50.00, as well as cases for infraction of the municipal by-laws. But as a result of amendments to the Criminal Code they may now hear cases against disorderly houses. These two recorders could close up the red light district in this city in one month if they would only commit the keepers to jail, as is provided for in the law, but their policy is still one of fining.

Here is the result of a study made of 374 keepers tried in 1921:

281 were fined.

13 were sentenced to pay costs.

27 were discharged.

7 sentenced suspended.

18 defaulted.

28 were sent to prison.

These figures speak for themselves. The keepers who were fined were keepers of the most notorious dens in town.

The Committee of Sixteen realizing that these recorders were taking advantage of the option of a fine in the case of keepers, endeavored to have Federal and Provincial laws passed that would ultimately dispose of the proprietors and keepers of these houses, and with that object in view, the Federal Government adopted a bill

amending Sec. 781 of the Criminal Code. This amendment provides a jail sentence without the option of a fine for:

- (a) A keeper convicted more than twice.
- (b) A keeper convicted from an address with respect to which more than two convictions have been made.

Towards the end of 1920 the civic authorities determined to avail themselves of this amendment in their campaign against disorderly houses, and by the 1st of January, 1921, had obtained against most of the keepers in the red light district three new convictions. Early in 1921, some 9 or 10 cases were made, therefore, under this amendment, and brought before the Recorder's Court. But before a final decision could be obtained, an event occurred that precluded any possibility of their ever being heard. The facts are as follows: One of the most notorious women in this city, Flora Harris, had been sentenced to six month's imprisonment on each of five charges of keeping. Her attorneys immediately attempted to secure her release by way of a writ of certiorari brought before the Superior Court. The point upon which they chiefly relied concerned itself with jurisdiction. Ever since cases of keeping had been made by the police, they had invariably been heard by the Recorder's Court. Naturally, the proceedings in all these cases (i.e., the complaints, warrants, bailbonds, convictions, committals, etc.), showed conclusively that the Recorder's Court had heard and decided them. The Superior Court was now called upon to decide that the Recorder's Court had no jurisdiction in such cases, and that only the Recorders, and the Recorders alone, could take judicial cognizance of them. The certiorari in the Harris case was duly heard, and on February 16, 1921, the presiding judge rendered judgment, dismissing it with costs. The attorneys of Flora Harris now made another attempt to release her, and brought the matter of jurisdiction before the King's Bench by way of a habeas corpus. Here they were more fortunate, for, during the month of March, 1921, this case was heard, and the presiding judge held that the Recorder's Court had no jurisdiction. Since Flora Harris had been tried by the Recorder's Court, and not by a Recorder sitting as a Recorder, he ordered her immediate discharge.

The results of these judgments were far-reaching. All cases pending against keepers had been lodged before the Recorder's Court, and, consequently, all previous convictions obtained against them became *ipso facto* null and void. In the same manner, and for the same reason, the 9 or 10 cases pending under the recent amendment to the Criminal Code had to be dropped. Moreover, three new

convictions were necessary, convictions made by the Recorders alone, before the new Act could be proceeded with.

Still determined to apply the amendment, the police began a series of raids with the aim of obtaining three proper convictions against keepers in the district. The first raid began on April 8, 1921, and by the end of the summer three new convictions had been registered against each disorderly house. At the beginning of September, 1921, the police began the fourth raid, and by October 7th, 1921, between 30 and 40 keepers had been arrested and charged under the amendment. One case was chosen as a test case, and was heard by both Recorders of the city of Montreal. On December 23rd, 1921, the Recorder gave judgment dismissing this case. Necessarily, all the other cases suffered the same fate. It is a long judgment, and is based on the following objections:

1st.—Substitution of name of accused for general description in information and warrant.

2nd.—Proof of previous conviction against premises.

3rd.—The information as laid is not in agreement with Part 16 of the Criminal Code or alternatively constitutes a new offence which removes it from under Sec. 774 of the Criminal Code.

Is it not unfortunate that such flimsy technicalities can obstruct the administration of laws, and it is also strange that while Montreal finds it is difficult to obtain a jail sentence for keepers, no other city in Canada is put to the same trouble.

Amongst the most guilty parties in this whole business are the proprietors, who, although notified when their houses are being used for purposes of commercialized vice, yet continue to defy the law. The Committee of Sixteen was successful in having passed at the 1920 session of the Provincial Legislature an "Injunction and Abatement Act." This law is directed against owners of property used for prostitution, and gives the courts the right to close them for a period of one year, against any use whatever.

A test case was commenced under this Act in April, 1920, against a notorious resort. On June 23rd, 1920, the interim injunction was granted. The case was heard on December 9th, 1920. The defendant had attacked the constitutionality of the Act, pretending that it was *ultra vires* of the powers of the Legislature. The Attorney-General of Quebec defended the right of the Province to pass such legislation.

On December 22nd, 1920, the presiding judge rendered judgment maintaining the action and the intervention, dismissed the plea and ordered the defendant's house closed for a period of one

year against its use for any purpose whatsoever. From this judgment the defendant entered an appeal to the Court of King's Bench. The appeal was heard in due course, and on December 20th, 1921, the judgment was handed down. This judgment maintained the intervention, but reversed the judgment of the Superior Court on the direct action, on the ground that the ownership of the house in question had not been established, and ordered its return to the lower court for such proof. By this judgment, maintaining an intervention, however, the Court of Appeals had confirmed the judgment of the Superior Court as to the constitutionality of the Act, and against it the defendant has not entered an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Pending the hearing of this appeal, all further proceedings are suspended.

And this is the law that has been used in closing the red light districts in American cities. Montreal has to-day the only recognized red light district in North America. The Committee of Sixteen are not a body of prudes nor hypocrites. They do not pose as keepers of the peoples' morals, but are stimulated by a sense of decency and a desire to make this a more healthy city to live in. I am sorry to say that after four years' strenuous efforts nothing to date has been accomplished to better conditions here.

Public opinion must be aroused before the police can or will clean up a city. This public opinion must be strong enough to break down bribery, corruption, intrigue and intimidation.