

The Recall in Seattle

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citizens. He paid no attention to the repeated requests that he remove Wappenstein and clear the city of promiscuous vice. Instead of taking steps to crush these evils, Gill attempted to establish them permanently. There was formed a corporation known as the "Hillside Improvement Company," the leading spirits in which were Gerald, Tupper, and other great captains of the underworld. The company purchased several acres of land in an outlying section, in the neighborhood of a large brewery. Here, under the protection of the Gill administration, was to be established the new restricted district. The corporation actually built, at considerable expense, a huge "crib house" containing two hundred and fifty rooms. Stock in this enterprise was openly peddled around Seattle, and it was generally regarded as an excellent investment. This enormous structure stands there to-day at the foot of the hill, cheerless, dark, untenanted, in full view of arriving visitors—a monument to the leading ideas of the Gill administration.

The "Recall" Petition Starts

For, before it could be opened, certain things had happened. A Public Welfare League had been organized, and had obtained injunctions closing up the old

restricted district and forbidding the opening of the new one. And now a small army of volunteers began calling at the homes and offices and business establishments of Seattle, requesting signatures to "A Petition for the Recall of Mayor Hiram C. Gill," specifying in detail the reasons for this drastic step. The petition signed by 10,701 male voters, demanding, under the terms of the Seattle charter, an election to decide whether Hiram C. Gill should retain his office as Mayor, was deposited on Dec. 20.

The several forces opposed to Gill selected, as their candidate, Mr. George W. Dilling, a prominent real-estate man. Dilling had served one term creditably in the Washington legislature, and enjoyed an excellent reputation for business honor and clean living. He had figured little in politics, had aroused no political antagonisms, and thus was an excellent candidate, about whom all the enemies of the Gill ideas could rally. The campaign that followed lasted only about thirty days.

Women Take Part in the Campaign

Since Hiram Gill's election in March, 1910, one far-reaching change had taken place in the political situation in Seattle. In the November election of 1910 the voters had adopted a constitutional amendment giving the franchise to women. The Recall election, therefore, furnished the State of Washington its first opportunity of testing the workings of this experiment. Naturally, this election presented an issue that made a powerful appeal to women voters. The politicians who supported Gill, realizing this, made all possible efforts to have the Recall election take place before the women could legally qualify to vote. In this, of course, they did not succeed. A Woman's Dilling Campaign headquarters was opened next door to a similar headquarters for the men.

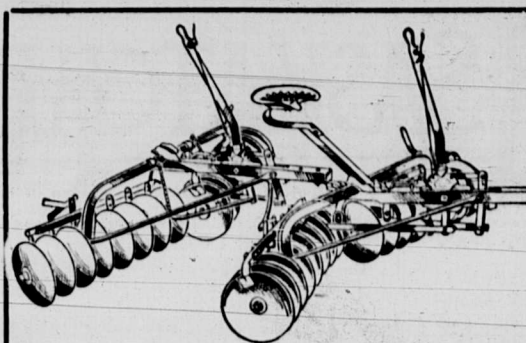
The women workers penetrated everywhere. Their campaign committee divided the city into districts and assigned districts to stipulated "workers." They made house-to-house canvasses, dragged forth the frequently reluctant mothers and daughters of Seattle, and personally conducted them to the registration booths.

"Red-Light" Women in the Campaign

And when the Gill forces saw that the Dilling committees were pressing women into service, they proceeded to follow their example. They handled their women allies in much the same way as Tammany Hall in New York herds its miscellaneous crowds of yagrants on election day. The "red-light" leaders brought to the registration booths automobiles filled with prostitutes. Many were aliens, particularly the French women, and few of the others had lived in Seattle long enough to acquire a voting residence. Like Tammany Hall, however, their leaders did not hesitate to register them. And just as Tammany imports trainloads of tramps and loafers from Philadelphia and other towns and "colonizes" them on the Bowery, so the Seattle "red-light" captains brought dissolute women from Tacoma, Portland, Vancouver, and installed them in the lodging-houses of the restricted district.

Women at the Polls

On election day the most picturesque figures were the women watchers stationed at the polls. They handed out cards to all comers: "Vote for Dilling and decency." Almost twenty-two thousand women voted—perhaps half the number of eligibles—against almost thirty-six thousand men. A large majority of these women unquestionably voted for Dilling. There were many women, however, who cast their first ballots for Hiram Gill. All the women of the restricted district, who came up noisily in automobiles, did this as a matter of course. But there were other automobiles from the respectable residential sections, filled with richly dressed women, ornamented with "Vote for Gill" banners. In many cases these women sat stiffly outside while their husbands went into the booths; in some cases they themselves got out and cast their ballots for the tenderloin Mayor. When the votes were counted, however, "Dilling and decency" had won by a comfortable majority. Whether Dilling would have won had it not been for the women's votes can not, of course, be decided. The fact that the largest Dilling majorities came from the wards where the increased registration was largest—the increased registration, of course, representing the new women voters—is one indication that the women



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voters may have been the determining factor. The Seattle Recall election must be regarded as a triumph for woman's suffrage.

The Seattle Exodus

Seattle will never forget the influx of undesirables that followed Mayor Gill's election in 1910. Neither will it ever forget the equally memorable outpouring that followed his recall. Mayor Dilling's first official act was to accept the resignation of Wappenstein, and to appoint as his successor Captain Claude Bannick—the same officer whose protest to Wappenstein against protected vice had been met with the suggestion that he "quit his job." Chief Bannick is a clean-cut, tall, muscular young man about thirty-five, an ex-football player with a constitutional aversion to the kind of things fostered by Wappenstein. The underworld promptly acted on the hint of Bannick's appointment. In the week following Dilling's election, from two to three thousand men and women left Seattle. The restricted district was congested with wagons carrying away their trunks and furniture. The pawn-shops were crowded with women pawning their jewelry to get the money to leave town. Train after train rolled out packed closely with emigrants of this type. Once more the restricted district became quiet and dark. Out of the uptown cafes and hotels the life had apparently gone. Street-

walkers had almost mysteriously vanished from the business sections.

Seattle does not claim that it has solved the vice problem. Unquestionably it still exists on a considerable scale. What Seattle has done has been to end the alliance between these elements and the constituted authorities. The people now control their government, and the vice exploiters have been driven out of public life. Vice is not encouraged to make its headquarters in Seattle; it is not even tolerated. And the city now is a thoroughly wholesome place in which to live. On the new conditions the testimony of so experienced a man as Detective William J. Burns is certainly valuable. A year ago, says Mr. Burns, Seattle was the vilest city in the United States. Now, he adds, it is the cleanest. Moreover, the city is not merely satisfied with driving out the old gang. It is punishing them. It has already secured a conviction and a penitentiary sentence of from three to ten years for Wappenstein. It has indicted on several counts practically all the men responsible for the recent conditions, and will unquestionably land many in the penitentiary. So much the Recall has done for Seattle.

"He's a queer man. Won't argue about the tariff."
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