

Who would dare hold such a view ?

Such a by-law could have been passed. It would, no doubt, have settled, to advantage, certain details of procedure. It has not been passed, but the city remains none the less obliged to suppress the evil, for suppression is ordained in the general law, and tolerance is ~~there~~ forbidden.

Yet, if such a by-law could have been passed, it was not necessary, for the city already had, and still has, all possible power, and is provided with all the machinery required to suppress such houses. It does suppress them when it wishes. It chooses its time ; it indicates to its officials the special houses to be raided ; arrests follow, and the Recorder condemns.

What is possible, even easy, in special cases, would not be more difficult to accomplish in the case of a general raid and a complete cleansing. All the constables admitted this in the course of the recent investigation. Only, there is some hesitation in the fact of the duty of total suppression in the apprehension of clandestine prostitution. Such secret prostitution we shall never be able to cause to cease. But you will increase it by allowing the scandal of public prostitution which perverts youth, leads to all kinds of excesses, defiles the soul and corrupts the body, when it does not destroy it prematurely. Secret prostitution will do its work anyhow, but the evil will always be in exact proportion to the immorality of the people. Now, if you pervert the people more by the ignoble and constant spectacle of public prostitution, how can you hope to diminish the secret ravages of hidden vice, which, it may be, completely escapes your jurisdiction, and for which you are not responsible ?

III.—ABUSES TO BE CORRECTED—REFORMS SUGGESTED.

The doctrinal falsity of the systems of inscription and official tolerance having been shown, in my humble opinion ; our laws being so clear and precise that the same cannot even be discussed in Canada, except from a merely theoretical standpoint, it now remains for me to point out to the Council several abuses which the investigation has disclosed and to suggest certain reforms which should be effected.

The system followed, so far, in Montreal, in the proceedings taken against the keepers of houses of ill-repute, the girls living in their dens and the unfortunate clients found therein, strikes me as deplorable. In the first place the police officers prepare their cases only on the complaint of neighbors, or when there arises such flagrant scandal that the action of the authorities becomes unavoidable. This is an entirely too limited circle of operations. There are neighbors in certain streets who will never complain. They are accustomed to the proximity of vice, perhaps relish it ; oftentimes they derive pecuniary profit therefrom.

Again, must the authorities wait for the appearance of a more than ordinary scandal, the occurrence of a shocking disturbance or an unusual accident to adopt repressive measures ?

I do not think so.

It was shown, during the recent investigation, that the police are well aware of a hundred and eighty or two hundred houses of disorder, or prostitution, or of rendezvous, existing in Montreal. As soon as such knowledge is acquired and the necessary proof is within the reach of the city the obligation to act is created, and *they fail to do their duty if action is not taken.*