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W. E. SEERY

GUTHRIE'S ATTACK ON REV. DR. SMITH

(Continued from page one)

this work demanded great wisdom and the employment of detectives who were thoroughly equipped for the task. When he again asked for the name of one place I replied that I would not give any information over the telephone but would be glad to meet him face to face and talk the matter over. When he further insisted on getting the information, I replied that I did not think it wise to spring this matter on the public on the eve of a civic election. After the election, whichever party wins, I would be willing to co-operate with them in cleaning up the city if an honest attempt was made to do so. When he claimed that I should give the information I replied that in my opinion this was not the time to do so and further, that it was the work of the Police Commission and not of private citizens. His statement that I said that he and the Citizens' Ticket would get the information on Monday is absolutely false. His statement that I had treasured this knowledge during the year for the purpose of flinging it at the heads of the Citizens' Ticket was met by my reply that during the year I had repeatedly referred to these things in the pulpit. His attempt to show I was playing the politician's trick of springing a surprise upon the Citizens' Ticket is false, as everything I have said has been said publicly during the year. His statement that I did not know about these places and had no information is false and I repeatedly told him I would not give the information over the telephone or give it at all in the present juncture. Throughout our conversation I took the stand that there was enough evidence public property to justify his department in making a searching investigation and I refused to become a party to his scheme. I had my own reasons for withholding what I may know. His letter has removed all doubt and I am absolutely convinced of the wisdom of my course in keeping my knowledge to myself.

The important thing in his letter is not his personal reference to me, but his own attitude to the supreme interests of the city. As chairman of the Administration of Justice Committee he has come into the city, and we have an opportunity of knowing his views and also his policy. His position is so singular that the citizens will be interested in studying it. In the first place, he assumes an air of innocence and ignorance as to the existence of any social evil in the city. Neither he nor the police know anything about this matter. Is he using the words "bawdy houses" in the legal technical sense? I never used this term in referring to local conditions. I claimed there were places destructive of manhood and womanhood and that this was publicly known. He goes on to say it is unfortunate that I should make these statements as they are not true. The telephone and the newspaper are not the place for handling these things in detail. Since his letter I have taken occasion to ask some of the men I incidentally met whether they know about these places. The official innocence and ignorance of the chairman was met with a smile. I found that it was more generally known that I had anticipated.

Young women walking our streets have been compelled to listen to disgusting conversation by young men concerning the social evil. Boys and girls are heard discussing the situation. Does the chairman of the police know nothing about whole families of illegitimate children supported by benevolent societies in connection with the churches and other societies which are endeavoring to care for the wretched? Do they know anything about the number of girls who are sent to refuge homes from this city? Do they know who is responsible for their condition? Do they know anything about these or other incidents in our city? There is no need of any special information. There is enough evidence in the public mind to warrant the suspicion that the social evil is eating into the life of the city. Are we to believe that the chairman and the Committee on Justice and the whole police force have no knowledge of these things or not enough suspicion as to arouse them from their ignorance. Ignorance of these matters might be pardonable in the case of citizens but to be asked to believe that the men especially charged with the duty of dealing with these matters are totally in ignorance is putting too much strain on human credulity. The confession of the chairman that the whole department is ignorant is the most damaging acknowledgement ever made by a public servant. It is an open admission of incompetence and inefficiency. If our water supply was teeming with deadly bacteria and our city engineer said he did not know anything about it and he was waiting for private citizens to supply him with information he would be prompt

ly dismissed. But the fact that the Department of Justice is taking that attitude is the occasion for the chairman to blame private citizens for not doing the work of his department. It is the business of the Police Department to keep the city clean to safeguard the people from danger, to make this city in reality what the chairman in his ignorance falsely assumes to be true. The position publicly taken by the chairman shows a lamentable failure to appreciate the significance of the office he holds. Any man or men desirous of removing these plague spots could easily with legal authority, find the source of infection and remove it. But to claim ignorance of the whole situation is deplorable. (What do our citizens say? Is this confession a good recommendation for a public servant. In any other than the political sphere such unparalleled ignorance would be relegated to oblivion. In all my experience with public men I never met such a bare-faced exhibition of boasted ignorance and assumed ignorance.

Then, in the second place, the Chairman has given us his moral attitude to the question of law enforcement. Listen: "If I were supplied with the list I would see that the city employed detectives at once, and the matter would be taken in hand." This sounds like the blast of a trumpet of a modern social reformer. It is well for the citizens of Fredericton to care fully analyze this professional zeal. He made this statement about places he said did not exist in the city, not in his mind a very formidable task. But character is a whole, and he that is faithful in little is also faithful in much. What about the other evils in Fredericton? His oath includes all laws. Does the Chairman or the police know anything about the violation of the Scott Act in the city? Have they ever heard of places where liquor might possibly be sold illegally? Have they ever heard of gambling dens in the city? Does the Chairman personally know where liquors are being sold in violation of the law? Has he employed detectives to run down the law breakers? Such questions are easily answered by the people and their answer only serves to show the wretched attitude of the man who would do everything to run down a bawdy house and yet leave open many dens where the life of the city is openly ruined. What do the citizens think of such a stand for the Chairman and his department? Where is the justice? Where is the protection? Where is the law enforcement? Where is the effort to give a clean city? When anyone studies the facts, was I wrong when I charged that immorality abounded in this city? Will the Chairman assume ignorance of the saloon? In view of this can anyone seriously believe that if I supplied the information it would have been used to suppress vice? The man who plays fast and loose with the saloon cannot be trusted with moral responsibility on other questions of a similar nature.

One aspect of his letter calls for a word of comment. He knows enough of good manners to expect other men to be gentlemen. When he says I kept certain facts for a purpose until the eve of election, which is false, what must the people think of the character of a man who took advantage of a private telephone conversation to write a false report on the Saturday evening before election, when he knew there was no opportunity for a reply through the same medium until after the election was over. I made my statement weeks ago. I leave the public to think. He knows enough about christianity to expect that other men should be Christian, but he does not know enough about it to make it possible for him to tell the truth about five minutes conversation over the telephone. If he had gone a little further into christianity he would have read the instructions to the disciples not to cast their pearls before the swine lest the swine would then turn and rend them. In modern English, do not give truth to people who when they get it, will use it to destroy the truth and the giver. He evidently thought that because I was a Christian I would make a fool of myself. I have played the game with gentlemen of the Christian's stripe before and I have learned a few things. He must excuse me if I will not put my foot into his trap.

I thank the Chairman for his open confession. It throws valuable light on the inner workings of the Department of Justice. He has rendered valuable service to the city, as he has acknowledged his incapacity for properly caring for its interests, and also has demonstrated that he tries to play the crooked game. If I have seen the means of helping the citizens to fully appreciate his services I feel this letter has not been written in vain.

Thanking you for your valuable space,

I am, yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.
St. Paul's Manse, March 11, 1912.

Mr. Jack Millar, who has been counting his boarding-house for the past month with a severe attack of rheumatism, is slowly recovering.

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