

CAMP ACTIVITIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS

U.S. Congress, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

TRAINING CAMP ACTIVITIES

STATEMENT OF

MR. RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

MARCH 14, 1918



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1918

When this particular figure of \$1,247,512 was put in the budget last September, it was done without consulting us, by the cantonment division. They gave this figure as the amount needed for the construction of post exchanges in the new camps and for repairs to existing post exchanges in camps and Regular Army posts. Subsequently, it was decided to transfer that particular expenditure to another appropriation, namely, to barracks and quarters. When I made representations to the Secretary of War that we had been passed by in making up the estimates, it was arranged that we could come in under this \$1,247,512 item, except that the cantonment division wanted \$150,000 of it. The estimate of \$1,247,000 was not our figure in the first place, and the amount we are asking for this coming year is \$1,500,200.

Mr. GORDON. In addition to this amount?

Mr. FOSDICK. No; that is the total. It is about \$200,000 more than the original figure.

I would like to outline something of the work that the commission is doing, so that you can see just how we are going to use this fund.

I represented the War Department down on the Mexican border in 1916 as special agent of the Secretary of War in looking up the conditions around army camps. I suppose some of you gentlemen are familiar with conditions that existed there at that time. Our men were scattered from Brownsville over to the Gulf of California—sometimes in the neighborhood of towns and sometimes out on the mesquite. There was not a camp that did not have its red-light district. Of course it was not officially run, but it was generally in the town near-by. Drunkenness among the troops was very prevalent, and conditions were thoroughly bad. We had an extraordinarily high rate of venereal disease down there.

When the war broke out in April, 1917, the President and the Secretary of War made up their minds that those conditions which I had reported in 1916 were not going to exist in connection with the mobilization of the new army; and we were especially instructed to see to it that all negative, restrictive action possible should be taken against those twin evils in connection with the soldiers in uniform; that is, prostitution on the one hand and drunkenness on the other. Therefore one of our main functions—I would not call it the principal function—has been to see to it that red-light districts and prostitutes, as far as possible, are swept out of existence and kept away from men in uniform; and that the law which Congress passed, section 12 of the military draft act, forbidding the sale of liquor to soldiers in uniform, is rigidly enforced. So that has been one of our responsibilities, and we have saddled up all the law-enforcing agencies in that work; that is, the Department of Justice, the local police officers, and any other agency that could be brought in to enforce those laws. And we have had, too, I am bound to say, rather extraordinary success, because we have had splendid cooperation, for the most part, from the local governments affected. Over 60 red-light districts have been closed around the country. There is not a red-light district near any military camp in the United States at the present time, and the prostitutes have been chased out of town and locked up or sent to reformatories, and you can see the result of the

thing in the constantly decreasing rate of venereal disease in the Army.

Our allies abroad, and also Germany and Austria, have been having a terrible time with venereal diseases. I read some official statistics the other day from Austria to the effect that since the war began the equivalent of 60 divisions of men have been rendered ineffective at some time or other with venereal disease; that is to say, 1,500,000. That means just this, that those men in the hospitals behind the lines were being protected by men who kept themselves clean and who were fighting in the trenches.

We felt from the beginning that inasmuch as this war was going to be won by man power we could not afford to lose a single man through any cause that modern police science could successfully grapple with, so that we have stressed this thing, and as I say, we have had considerable success in making the necessity of the thing vivid around the country.

Mr. KAHN. May I ask you a question right in that connection?

Mr. FOSDICK. Certainly.

Mr. KAHN. I understand that where the camps are in the neighborhood of large cities the danger is not so much from the inhabitants of the red-light district as it is from the semiprostitute, the girl who works, probably, in some shop, and then visits the camp in the evening surreptitiously and has intercourse with the men. She is frequently diseased and gives the disease to the men. I understand that that is the real danger near the large cities. Have you grappled with that subject?

Mr. FOSDICK. We have tried to, sir. You are quite right in your supposition. Up in Plattsburg, for example, at the officers' reserve training camp, we found that venereal disease was coming not from the prostitutes, but from the type known in military camps as the flapper—that is, the young girls who were not prostitutes, but who probably would be to-morrow, and who were diseased and promiscuous. Of course, that was an exceedingly difficult thing to get at; but in order to do so, we formed a committee that we called, for lack of a better name, a committee on protective work for girls, and I secured Miss Maud Miner, of New York, as chairman. She has had broad experience in this kind of work, and after a pretty thorough study of the way they were getting at it in England, we adopted the English system—that is, a system of women protective officers in the neighborhood of the camps.

The ordinary copper can not successfully deal with these girls. They are not prostitutes. They are well known around town, but he can not send them home, whereas a woman protective officer can, and we have been stimulating, through this committee, the appointment of women protective officers in the neighborhood of the military camps in the United States, and we have about 65 of those officers now. In most cases they are paid by the municipality, in some cases by the State governments, and there are two or three in each camp. They patrol the environment of the camp—that is, the woods near-by or the streets in the town. They know the girls, for the most part, because it is only the exceptional case where we have a very large city in the neighborhood of the camp, for instance, Louisville and New York City, and three or four women patrolling the streets can