

# THE BLUNDER AT BINGHAM

By TOD GOODWIN

THE good people of Bingham, men and women alike, comprising those of the decent element who have lived there for years, who are property owners and who have the best interests of the town at heart, are up in arms over the recent move of the county attorney's office through an underling in that office, Wilson McCarty, having for its object the closing of the restricted district. That the citizens of Bingham are rightly incensed; that the move is not a moral one, but a political one and that such action, if consummated, will result in a great menace to that community is apparent to anyone who has personally investigated every phase of the existing conditions and impartially interviewed merchants, professional men and other people of standing. The question has many ramifications, but all things considered, the consensus of opinion is that regulation and restriction such as has been practiced there for years is the only salvation for the town, and that if the unfortunates who have lived in the "Redlight" district are scattered, the result will be a condition so dangerous that those who have their homes in Bingham shudder in contemplation.

In calmly viewing the conditions, the first thing to be taken into consideration is the fact that about eighty-five per cent of the population are foreigners, working in the mines—Greeks, Italians, Austrians, Finns and others—but not withstanding that, during the many years that there have been a restricted district there, every woman residing in Bingham has been able to go on the streets at night or in the various canyons on the way home without the slightest fear of molestation. That has always been a mining camp rule in the west where there has been a restricted district, and has always applied in Bingham. There can be no legal issued raised as to whether or not such a district is within the law. It is not, but the moral rights of the decent people in Bingham are so much greater than the legal wrong, that they are thoroughly justified in taking the position that they have.

To divert a moment, and to bring home an immediate instance of what the unannounced raid has meant, there are people living in erstwhile respectable apartments and rooming houses who have announced their intention of moving immediately, owing to the sudden influx of undesirable neighbors whose visitors roamed the halls and insulted any woman they encountered.

The Salt Lake papers announced, quoting those in the county attorney's office, that Deputy Ed. Wilcox had sent word that practically all of the unfortunates from the "Redlight" district, had left the town. A great many of them had and had come to Salt Lake where some are still residing. Others are scattered all over Bingham wherever they could light and are plying their world old vocation without interference.

In regard to the complaints and the raid that followed, one Otto Kappeler, swore to them, they were served by Deputy G. E. Wilcox and others and the women were paraded through the streets in the morning to the office of precinct Justice of the Peace Dudley. Some pleaded guilty and were released on bond, some pleaded not guilty and were released on their own recognizance. Mr. Mulliner and Mr. McCarty, according to the statement of the county commissioners, did not consult with the commissioners on the step to be taken, but just went ahead and later, when Commissioners Wheeler and Crabbe visited Bingham accompanied by Sheriff Corless, they did not hesitate to say that Bingham should regulate its own affairs without interference.

Regarding the action of the officials here in taking it upon themselves to make the political play at Bingham the people there have some vigorous remarks to make on the subject, suggesting that if those who inaugurated and conducted the raid really want to clean up the county rather than play peanut politics; if they are sincere in the matter, that it is up to them to begin in Salt Lake where the evil is just what it will be in Bingham if the "Redlight" district is closed.

It was remarked above that the women were paraded through the streets in the morning, and in this connection it is only fair to observe that since restriction was placed on the "Redlight" district, women have never, of their volition, paraded the streets in the day time and are never on the streets at night.

Presumably by command of payroll editor "Spinach" Wallace, the Telegram published an editorial on the subject recently in which it did Bingham a great injustice. Among other things it said, "In Bingham many hard working and clean thinking men are doing their best to properly rear their children. They are fighting against terrible odds when gambling dens, all night saloons and fallen women run riot in the camp." Then in large capital letters, necessary in some editorials to emphasize what the writer wishes to convey it said, "It should be no more difficult for the child of a miner to learn the beautiful lessons of life and good morals than for the little daughter of a multimillionaire to learn them. The innocence of all children should be guarded as something sacred." In the same article we find

that "This is utterly impossible when the creatures of the underworld are allowed free reign to parade their sin and make innocence a byword in the town." All of which only goes to show that whoever wrote or inspired the article knew nothing of conditions in the great copper camp and that in reality, the hard working and clean thinking men who are doing their best to properly rear their children, will probably take immediate steps to see that those children are sent elsewhere if the women of the tenderloin are allowed to run riot by the removal of restrictions and regulations.

A mining camp must be a little different from other communities, especially when the living conditions of a great host of foreigners are such as they are at Bingham, and by being different, it is not meant that a perpetual carnival of crime is necessary, but that such evils as exist must be under police surveillance. And speaking of crime, in the seven years that there has been a restricted district in Bingham, the police records show fewer crimes in the "Redlight" district proportionately than in any other place in the state. Speaking editorially as it did, the Telegram proved that it knew nothing whatever of conditions and that it had not taken time to investigate or ask any sterling citizen his opinion, and just went off half cocked in its semi-socialistic way, including the Wallace brand of chatter which causes his utterances to make him a laughing stock. The Telegram owes the decent people of Bingham an apology.

The question of graft has been raised by some of those who are expressing themselves as favorable to a restricted district, appearing to be angry because they allege that there are those living in luxury upon the graft. If that is the case why persecute the unfortunate denizens of the "Redlight?" Why not go after the grafters if there are any and show them up?

During the last election in Bingham when the Citizens and Independent parties locked horns, the "Redlight" question was the issue brought up by such men as Otto Kappeler, Ed. Wilcox and others. The result of the vote was two to one in favor of F. E. Straup, the members of the town board and other officials, which was sufficient unto itself to prove the attitude of the citizens on the question.

After the election there were numerous soreheads; a little later on they began to mumble "graft," then they found an ambitious young man who wanted to make a record and so Mr. Wilson McCarty began the completion of the "get even" work started by Otto Kappeler and Ed. Wilcox, and Justice of the Peace Dudley was on hand for the women to be brought before him. It might be mentioned in this connection that Mr. Dudley who is justice of the peace of the whole precinct must share his honors, so to speak, since the passing of the Wolstenholme bill,

with another justice of the town, appointed by the town board under the provisions of that bill. Referring to the alleged graft, the insinuation has been made that it came of the police regulation and the necessity of the inmates of the "Redlight" presenting health certificates from licensed physicians at stated intervals. The payment for examinations was a matter between the persons examined and the physicians employed, and so far as the fines went, that is a docket record of the precinct justice up to the time the town justice took charge and since then of record in the docket.

In passing it would not do to omit specific mention of G. E. Wilcox and Otto Kappeler. Four years ago Mr. Wilcox was on the police force, but was not reappointed by the board, the members of which say they had good reasons for not reappointing him. Then he was appointed deputy sheriff in Bingham and began immediately to make trouble for the administration. Otto Kappeler who has a hog ranch down in the valley below Bingham canyon is a county health officer and hauls the garbage in the precinct outside of the incorporated town. Far be it from us to suggest that mayhap his hogs indulge in his garbage. With the notoriety both Wilcox and Kappeler enjoy as trouble makers; considering the bankruptcy records; in view of the contempt in which they are held by many business and professional men of Bingham, and also that the county commissioners were not consulted before the raid was made; makes it easy to believe that spite and petty politics are the motives actuating Wilcox and Kappeler and the others instrumental in stirring up the town. If Kappeler would clean up his own dirty premises before becoming a crusader, the good people of Bingham would be more satisfied with him and with the town, especially if his endeavors at home would keep him out of Bingham proper.

As to Justice Dudley he was interviewed regarding his personal views in reference to a "Redlight" district and assured the interviewer that he could not express himself personally in view of his official position. Mr. Dudley is about as important as most justices of the peace who feel their duties keenly and would just as leave not divide the fees.

Of the four men who are making most of the trouble at Bingham, none, it is said, is a taxpaying property owner.

There is another phase of this situation that has not been spoken of. The property owners surrounding the "Redlight" district have no complaint whatever to make, in fact no one would know, in passing, that the place is a "Redlight" district unless pointed out, and in interviewing not only these property owners but respectable merchants all over the place without picking or choosing, it was found that

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