

POLICE BAFFLED IN ATTEMPTS TO BREAK UP GANGS OF IDLERS

Say Mountainside Jungle Is Haunt of Men
Addicted to Wine Drinking—Those
With Pensions Escape Penalties

Winebibbers who refuse to work and yet can not be jailed because they are in receipt of small pensions or other small amounts of income are creating a serious problem for the police, the courts and enforcement officers of the National Selective Service, it was disclosed this morning.

Do Little Work

A few days ago Constables William Stamp and George Caton, morality officers, raided the "jungle" on the mountainside just west of Ferguson avenue. They picked up several men, all more or less intoxicated on cheap wine. One man who has worked one month a year for the last seven years, and another who has worked for a period of six weeks in four years, including four days this year, were charged with being "vags," but they proved to the court that they were in receipt of small pensions—in one case about \$16 a month and in the

other \$22 a month—and the charges were dismissed.

"It is certainly a problem to decide what we can do with men of that type," said James Chambers, city liquor court prosecutor. He declared that he was writing the local enforcement officer of the National Selective Service to urge that some action be taken.

"The police are handicapped in dealing with these men who are able-bodied and well able to do some work in these trying times," said Mr. Chambers. He asserted that under the National Selective Service laws all able-bodied persons up to the age of 65 years must work or they are liable to prosecution.

However, the local police when they attempt to charge the "drones" in court often are faced with technicalities which result in charges being dismissed. In his letter to the Selective Service officers here, Mr. Chambers stressed the handicaps faced by the police and requested that the problem be given serious consideration by Government enforcement officers.

"There are plenty of men in Hamilton not working and who are living by their wits," said Constable Stamp, who referred to them as a "floating population of idlers."

Could Do Useful Work

In some cases, the men obtaining pensions are veterans of the last war but, according to the police, with few exceptions all are able to hold down some job if willing to do so. In fact, pensioners with 50 per cent. or more disability are all working, and glad to be able to do something, but in other cases men with from ten to 25 per cent. disability and receiving pensions not sufficient to support them proper-

ly, too often spend their time "soaking up the sunshine" and sipping wine. It is this type, some of them panhandlers, that the police are anxious to clear from city streets.

Members of the morality squad say that no one has any desire to compel men on pension of any kind to do work they are physically unable to do, but those who are hardy enough to stand the strain of drinking wine and other alcoholic beverages day in and out should be able to retain some form of employment.

Path Worn to Hangout

Referring to the famous jungle on the Mountainside, Constable George Caton said it formerly was used by canned heaters, but is now the open-air home of wine drinkers.

"They have worn a path from the city sidewalks to the park proper, and the ground is strewn with empty and broken bottles," said Constable Caton. He said that glasses, presumably taken from some beverage room, are hidden at vantage points in the tall grass for use of members of the clan.

Officials of the Selective Service office refused to comment on the problem facing the police in respect to non-workers until they have made themselves familiar with all details pertaining to the court cases cited in the letter.

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