

Informant escapes brushes with the law

In the spring of 1909, Mayor Claude Malott and the Rev. Thomas White, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, disagreed over whether the city police had done all they could to get rid of the blind tigers in Bloomington. At a city council meeting on April 9, the mayor gave the public some interesting insights about local law enforcement.

Malott had asked the council to appropriate \$50 to supplement the police department budget. The Bloomington *Telephone* explained: "The council readily voted the \$50 which is to be used to fight, as the mayor declared, in the only manner in which the case can be fought and one which the anti-saloon league uses, yet the police are blamed for not accomplishing the same thing. It is the "secret police" system — men in private clothes as amateur detectives, who, how-



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ever, must be paid for their services in running down tigers. The \$50 is to be used to pay these men to run down such violations for the city and furnish clues to the police."

One of their informants, who assisted with the Wertz blind tiger case — Charles W. (China) Harris — had later been caught on the wrong side of the law. He had been charged with visiting a westend prostitute — quaintly called fornication on the court docket — and offering to furnish a prisoner in the jail a saw and

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