

# WHY FILTH ABOUNDS

## Revelations in Reference to Streets and Alleys.

### WOMEN USE THEIR EYES.

### An Investigation by the Municipal Order League.

### REPORTS OF THE MEMBERS.

### How Careless City Employees Neglect Their Labors.

### BITTER COMMENT OF RESIDENTS.



REVELATIONS in reference to the neglected, filthy, and disease-breeding condition of Chicago's streets and alleys will be made with a particularity, array of facts, and knowledge acquired by personal investigation never before attempted when the Municipal Order League meets next Monday. The league was formed only this spring, but with such women as Ada C. Sweet in every ward and almost every precinct in the city fighting for public cleanliness and watching the negligence and incompetency of public servants it is thought about time for revelations and reforms.

The meeting next Monday will be the third regular monthly one of the league and will be specially interesting because the reports of members as to the condition of the streets and alleys in their immediate neighborhoods will be submitted for consideration. The reports are, in most instances, exhaustive ones and made out on blanks supplied by the league. The blanks embrace a series of thirty-six questions and cover every necessity connected with the removal of dirt and garbage and the actual condition of the streets and alleys.

The first four questions relate to the locations of streets and alleys in the precinct of the ward where the member or investigator lives and whether they are paved or unpaved. The fifth question is: "What arrangements have been made in your yard or street or alley adjoining your yard for garbage or ashes receptacles?"

The seventh question is, "What is the name of the Health Inspector of your ward, and where does he live?" And the answers show the persistence with which that official keeps himself invisible. Few of the investigating members could ever find or locate him. They have had the same difficulties about the contractor employed to remove garbage, etc., and only by merest chance could learn anything about the street-cleaning contractor. Question nine is, "How often is the garbage, etc., removed?"

The answers show the irregularity of the service. At some few points the garbage is removed daily, at others two or three times a week; in the Eleventh Ward "usually once a week," in the Twelfth Ward "very irregularly," or not often," in the Fourth Precinct of the Thirty-second Ward "every two weeks," and in the Eight Precinct of the same ward "whenever it pleases his honor."

Question 11—"How often are the streets swept?" "Every day by private arrangements" in the Sixteenth Precinct of the Second Ward; "sometimes every month, but not for the last three months"; "April 19, the last time since last fall"; "very seldom"; "not this year"; "not once in six months"; "once since last fall"; "indefinitely"; "hardly ever"; "when the spirit moves the tax-eater"; such are samples of the answers given.

Question 14—"Are the alleys ever thoroughly cleaned?" A member living in the First Precinct of the First Ward promptly answers "Never," and the like answer, with slight variations, comes from every ward and precinct heard from. A woman in the Third Precinct of the Twelfth Ward says: "Perhaps, but not since I've been watching."

Question 19—"Did you ever see the Health Inspector or the Public Works Inspector on duty in your district?" "No," "Never," are the responses from all directions.

Questions 20 to 23 relate to the collecting of garbage and the manner in which it is removed. The answers show that open wagons are invariably used in removing it, and that only in rare instances is any covering used, and then only a piece of cloth.

Question 24—"Do the wagons spill their contents?" "They are both spilled and blown off," is the tenor of most of the replies. "The wagons leave a trail of filth behind them, and often scatter through a ward what they collect in a precinct," is the substance of one answer.

### Careless Work of City Employees.

Question 26—"Do the men look strong?" "They are so dirty you cannot tell," is what a West Side woman replies. "Not strong enough to lift alone the barrels of garbage, so all is emptied on the street and then shoveled into the wagon, leaving the street disgustingly littered," is another testimony. "Usually young and colored," "they are not old but are lazy and lack strength," are two other opinions.

Question 27—"Are they expeditious at their work?" "Yes, so much so that they only half do it," is a reply with irony in it, and "possibly too much so," is another.

The greatest variance is in the answers to question 28—about the kind of horses the contractors use. This probably is due to the fact that women are but poor judges of horses anyhow. Some assert that the horses are walking skeletons, others that they are good and fat, and one expresses the average opinion in describing them as "fair, not crippled nor sick." All, however, may be right in their judgments, for the contractors use animals of varying conditions.

Question 29—"In street cleaning, how long is it after the dirt is swept up in heaps before the carts come after it?" The answers to this show that the dirt heaps are allowed to remain oftentimes for weeks unless the wind and traffic scatter them before that. "Sometimes it is never removed," says one, and "It may be weeks and it may be months," declares another.

The catechism ends with a couple of questions about alleys, and the answers are expressed in exclamations such as "Horrible!" "Indescribable!" "Awfully filthy!" One investigator says "there are no alleys in Lake avenue excepting one belonging to the I. C. R. R., which is always in a filthy condition."