

VIRTUE NOT MADE BY ORDINANCE

Mr. U'Ren Raps City Commission for Stand on Circulation of Book.

PORTLAND, June 27.—(To the Editor.)—The Portland City Commission is surely the funniest bunch in Oregon, but I refuse to believe that I am personally to blame in any degree for the holy haste with which they rushed through an emergency ordinance to protect female virtue in Portland from Margaret Sanger and her teachings. I have thought heretofore that women were able to guard their virtue and train their daughters without the aid of a bunch of politicians in the City Hall. Whether I am right or wrong in this, it is much to be hoped that the good intentions of these saintly men will be fully appreciated by the women who need such protection, because the ordinance itself is waste paper. Courts and juries, not legislative officers, have the right to decide whether the circulation of any certain book may be lawfully prohibited and punished.

The part of this controversy that I believe to be worthy of the serious attention of every man and woman is the contemptuous disregard by the Mayor and his private secretary for the constitutional right of citizens to "speak, write or print freely on any subject whatever." If these men and the City Council are permitted to pass ordinances and use the police to suppress one book or one class of teaching, it will not be long before they are suppressing others, regardless of rights or constitutional provisions. There are many other forms of agitation that are quite as distasteful to the Mayor and other holy men as the limitation of families is to the members of the Commission.

I am not deeply interested in Margaret Sanger's teaching. That every woman has a natural right to limit the number of her children, or even refuse to be a mother at all, seems to me too clear for argument. The taxpayers could well afford to furnish every woman with the information contained in Mrs. Sanger's book. Small families, reared in the comfort, cleanliness and motherly love that is rarely possible for the swarming brood, would soon multiply the vacant rooms in our jails and other places where we put the vicious, dependent and defective classes.

WILLIAM S. UREN.