

SOURCE 1

Extract from an article in *The Times* newspaper about vice in London streets, July 1913

(PRO ref: HO 45/10123/B13517)

HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Study this source carefully and consider what it tells you about why people thought women should get the vote. You should consider:

ASK YOURSELF:

- What are the MPs discussing in this debate?
- What do they think should be done?
- What attitudes are shown towards women?
- Do you get the impression that men or women are seen as responsible for prostitution?
- Do you think women's suffrage campaigners would have been interested in this issue?

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Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said that nothing but a sense of duty caused him to call attention to the disgraceful condition of many of the streets of London at night time. He asked hon. members to consider what it was possible for them to do in order to clear the country from what had become a national reproach. He had travelled in many countries, and he asserted that in no country could one see such sights as he saw in the metropolis. There was not a heathen country in which there were the open incentives to vice as were to be found in Piccadilly and neighbouring streets, for instance, at night.

He would naturally be asked how this difficulty could be grappled with. In answer he would point to Liverpool,

they formed a vigilance committee, worked upon public opinion, and at last elected a reforming watch committee to enforce the law ;

In the course of ten years the outward aspect of Liverpool was changed. He could not say that the habits of great masses of people were changed by outward alterations, but it made a great difference, and it was a great benefit that young men were not assailed on every side by temptation.

In fairness, while referring to the facts, it was right to mention that respectable women, and especially young girls, were in constant danger of insult and annoyance from men in London streets.

Mr. SOUTAR (Dumfriesshire) seconded the motion. He said it was especially on behalf of young men that he pleaded with the Home Secretary. He did not pretend that it was possible to prevent sin in London. All they asked was that the Home Office should make London just as good as other cities were.