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## Drugs and Crime

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by a week in which the patient is made to eliminate by means of cathartics, diuretics, sweat baths, massage and other means for ridding him of the poisons which have accumulated in his system for so long a time. This treatment has met with good results in the California State Prison at San Quentin, where many addicts are treated.

Recently a new treatment has been brought out and much is claimed for it by its sponsors. In this method the patient is given repeated injections of salt solution into the vein for a period of several days.

These in brief are the methods of ridding the addict of his habit. As yet no method has been devised to keep the patient from reverting after the cure. The only means to combat these, as previously noted, are return to proper surroundings, curtailment of narcotic production, and re-education.

## DRUGS AND CRIME

ALBERT J. WEBER<sup>1</sup>

At the last annual meeting of the Institute in Cleveland, August, 1918, its Chairman, the Honorable Francis Fisher Kane, presented the committee's report of the narcotic drug evil as it then existed in the United States. Alas, it is to be regretted greatly that this evil, an enervating and demoralizing scourge, a terrific disgrace to modern civilization and a menace to mankind, has so increased that it is beyond control of the municipal, State and Federal authorities.

The newly elected Democratic Governor of the State of New York, in a special message to the legislature (Republican) in January, 1919, recommended laws for abolishing the new State Department of Narcotic Drug Control Commission, which came into existence by enactment in April, for transferring its work to the State Health Department and creating a new special bureau.

The legislature peremptorily declined to take action for the repeal. The Governor then appointed a Democratic ex-New York State Senator, a lawyer and resident of New York City, as the commissioner in charge of the State Department drug control *vice* the former Republican incumbent an upstate druggist appointed by a Republican

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<sup>1</sup>Foreman of Grand Jurors, United States of America, for the Southern District of New York, who recently and for several past terms officially investigated the illegitimate traffic in narcotic drugs.

Governor. The public press characterized the modus operandi as a partisan political fight.

The new drug control law went into effect February 1, 1919, requiring every physician, druggist and other person dispensing habit-forming drugs to register with the State before the above date. Those who failed to register lost their right to sell narcotic drugs. There are about 45,000 drug dispensers in the State who must register over 3,000 drug stores in New York City.

In New York City alone there are resident 300,000 narcotic drug addicts, if not more, and the criminals who are confirmed narcotic drug addicts by personal choice to gratify their degenerate appetite are known to Lieutenant Henry Sherb of the Police Department of the City of New York, who is in charge of the narcotic bureau squad who approximates their number as over 10,000.

The Health Department of the City of New York opened the Riverside Hospital with 200 beds for narcotic drug addicts on North Brother Island, East River, New York City, for their free treatment, so as to control and regulate as much as possible the terrificly increasing and unavoidable catastrophe of narcotic drug addictions. All admitted patients are treated individually and their clinical history is safeguarded from publicity. The cause of their addiction is there ascertained, and they are restored to healthier conditions, both mentally and physically.

The Health Department of the City of New York also opened in New York City free clinics, quasi relief stations for the narcotic drug addict and charged him for his drug only about four cents a grain. The average dose dispensed to the patient was fifteen grains, the smallest dose seven grains, the maximum twenty-six grains on the first day.

It was suggested that the narcotic drug addicts should be branded on the arm with nitrate of silver, finger printed, and photographed, so as to stop them from getting prescriptions from divers physicians who otherwise call for enormous amounts of narcotic drugs and thus forestall a cure and put a premium on vending their excess amounts so obtained from druggists at extortionate figures.

Serious objection was made to these methods of identification. The Mayor of the City of New York in conference with his Health Commissioner, a physician of excellent repute, discussed new methods of procedure to prevent persons from procuring narcotic drugs that are sold and distributed promiscuously and in direct violation of the law by certain dishonest doctors, dealers and jobbers and the enact-

ment of new State laws for prohibitive and correctional purposes. They suggested a law for compulsory registration and identification and making it a misdemeanor for a physician to prescribe narcotic drugs or cocaine for an addict without identification or for a druggist to honor the prescription without identification.

There are 15,000 licensed physicians in the State of New York, and over 9,500 individuals spuriously practicing medicine without a license who prescribe and sell narcotic drugs to addicts at fabulous prices and exploit the misery of these unfortunate creatures. The sales of narcotic drugs and cocaine in the City of New York within the last months has been unprecedented and unheard of; thousands of pounds of sulphate of morphia, heroin and cocaine were sold and manufacturers cannot supply the demand.

Cocaine in particular is greatly in demand. When prohibition is in force, persons, especially drinkers from compulsion of habit who have been robbed of their daily drink, will naturally resort to cocaine, which is not a narcotic, but a soothing drug.

Information conveyed to me as Foreman of Grand Jurors, United States of America, of the Southern District of New York, I transmitted to the narcotic squads of the Revenue Service and Police Department. This resulted in the raid and round-up of druggists and certain physicians, their arrest and indictment, the seizure of over \$100,000 worth of narcotic drugs and demonstrated the existence of an organized drug ring in New York City a chain of drug stores operating solely under contract with certain physicians who, for a petty fee of twenty-five to fifty cents, write prescriptions for persons who desire narcotic drugs.

The public press states that the Health Commissioner of the City of New York has transmitted to the City Corporation Counsel a proposed amendment to the City Sanitary Code *re* "changes in the drug law" and has asked an opinion as to its legality, urging that something must be done to stop the drug evil and asserting his department is helpless as "the State Narcotic Commission has all the power and will not use it." The proposed amendment is in accordance with the previously published ideas of the Health Commissioner regarding the necessity for registration and identification of "addicts."

The Health Commissioner further states "had not the New York State Legislature passed the act creating a Commission on Narcotic Drug Control" the Department of Health would have all the necessary authority to wipe out the drug evil and that he would be bitterly disappointed if he could not have the authority.

The State Commissioner of Drug Control is quoted in the public press as saying there is no prospect of immediate action on his part and that he will be pleased if the City of New York Health Commissioner will be able to get the sanitary code amended, thereby permitting him to act.

In the United States Senate, 65th Congress, second session, on July 13, 1918, the senior senator from the State of New Jersey, the Honorable Joseph S. Frelinghuysen, submitted a resolution which was ordered to lie over under the rule and referred the committee on contingent expenses. The resolution was to the effect that the President of the United States should be authorized to appoint a commission of three citizens to make inquiry into the subject of narcotic and habit-forming drugs. The commission should investigate the causes which lead to the use of such drugs, the extent of their use and the kind used; it should study the drug addict himself, etc., etc., and recommend to the President, and through him to Congress, the best methods in its judgment of regulating the importation, manufacture, sale and use of narcotic and habit-forming drugs and of solving the whole problem presented by the drug addict. The sum of fifty thousand dollars was to be appropriated for the purpose above indicated.

In August, 1918, the Secretary of the Treasury appointed a committee consisting of a representative Ph.D of the Hygienic Laboratory, United States Public Health Service, a representative of the Surgeon General's Office in the War Department, and the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, for the purpose of making a study of narcotic drug problems with a view to recommending needful changes for the control of the traffic.

This committee has acquired valuable data *re* the extent of narcotic drug addiction in the United States and its relation to public health and national efficiency.

The Commissioner of Internal Revenue in his annual report states: "It seems evident that comprehensive and effective administration of the narcotic laws must be based upon an international agreement and co-operative interpretation under which the world trade may be adequately policed."

The United States Bureau of Internal Revenue has presented to the Red Cross \$75,000 worth of confiscated narcotic drugs recently. About \$20,000 worth of cocaine, morphine and heroine seized from illicit venders is now stored in the chemical laboratory of the Treasury Department, Washington, D. C.

For years I have studied narcotic drug addiction and am still doing so from all angles. From information conveyed to me by thousands of addicts I am of the opinion that unintentionally members of the medical fraternity of the highest repute and standing, when prescribing drugs to assuage pain, often permit their sympathy to sway their mature clinical judgment and overlook both the lurking danger to their patients and their violation of the law.

In conclusion, your committee is absolutely compelled to indicate, as was said in last year's report, that present conditions in relation to the illegitimate sale, distribution, and traffic in narcotic drugs of every kind throughout the country despite of all legislative, executive and administrative efforts to curb it, have increased and immediate congressional legislation in effective and practical statutes, should be enacted so as to curb and dethrone this gigantic monstrosity.