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Minor Survey of the Administration of Criminal Justice in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport

Florence L. C. Kitchelt

Tierra Farrow

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MINOR SURVEY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN HARTFORD, NEW HAVEN AND BRIDGEPORT

INTRODUCTION

This survey was undertaken and carried on under the auspices and supervision of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. Mr. James Bronson Reynolds, President of the Institute during 1922 and 1923, until his untimely death on January first, 1924, was the moving spirit and the director of the survey during its inception and its early stages. Whatever merit the plan and the product may possess is due to him.

The criteria of the effective administration of criminal justice have been assumed to be the following:

1. The Cost of Crime: Is it relatively great or small, per case and per capita?
2. Complaints of Crime and Arrests: Are they relatively few or many?
3. Treatment of Offenders: Are their sentences or releases apparently adjusted to the social needs of offenders?
4. Suspension of Sentences: Is this power of the Court apparently abused or is it used judiciously?
5. Execution of Law: Is it speedy and sure or slow and faulty?
6. What is the percentage of convictions?
7. Repeaters: Are they treated just as first offenders are, or differently?
8. Insurance Rates: It may be a fair assumption that the rate for insurance against theft for example, is an index of the effective administration of justice in a community; of the law abidingness of a community, at any rate.

If reliable data, apropos of these criteria, can be turned up in various communities and be set into juxtaposition for purposes of comparison we shall have taken a substantial step forward in the direction of stimulating and usable criminal statistics. When this shall have been accomplished, furthermore, we shall be in a position as criminologists, to estimate the situation in a given community in relation to that in other communities. It is obvious that, in view of the present state of criminal statistics in this country, neither absolute nor relative statements relating to most of the assumed criteria mentioned above can mean as much as we should like to have them mean.

We make no pretense to having accumulated and analyzed such a mass of data that we are enabled to apply the criteria above as measuring rods to the administration of criminal justice in Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven. We have made but a limited survey, and we hope that something in it may be useful and that it may prove to be at least a point of departure for enterprises of a similar nature elsewhere.

Several distinguished citizens and officials of the State of Connecticut have contributed articles relating to criminal law and procedure and to the execution of penalties in the state. The American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology is under a heavy obligation to these contributors. Their articles are published here as a part of this report.

Following is the table of contents of this section of contributed articles:

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES

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- I. Criminal Trials Without a Jury in Connecticut, by William M. Maltbie, Justice of the Supreme Court of Errors, Hartford, Conn.
- II. Petty Magistrates' Courts in Connecticut, by George H. Day, Judge of the City Police Court, Hartford, Conn.
- III. The Office of Prosecutor in Connecticut, by Walter M. Pickett, Judge of the Court Common Pleas, New Haven County, Conn.
- IV. Public Defenders in Connecticut, by Kenneth Wynne, Member of the New Haven County Bar.
- V. Legal Aid in Connecticut, by Thomas Hewes, Member of the Hartford Bar.
- VI. The County Jail in Connecticut, by Emily Sophie Brown, County Commissioner, New Haven, Conn.