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Announcement Concerning Reviews and Bibliography/Prison Congress of 1926, The

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EDITORIAL

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING REVIEWS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Management of the Journal announces with a great deal of satisfaction that Professor Thorsten Sellin of the University of Pennsylvania has accepted an Associate Editorship on the Journal staff. He has assumed responsibility for the department of Reviews and Criticisms and for a bibliography of criminologic literature to be published in each succeeding number. The new arrangement will take effect with Volume XVIII and it will make the Journal much more useful to students and to general readers than it has been in recent years.

Professor Sellin may be addressed in care of the Department of Sociology in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and all literature intended for his attention should be sent directly to him.—Eds.

THE PRISON CONGRESS OF 1926

The Prison Congress of 1926 differed in several respects from all its predecessors. The meeting, held at Pittsburg in October brought together over 500 delegates from 42 states.

The program was patterned somewhat after that of the International Prison Congress, with general sessions given to presenting formal papers, followed by an entire session for the discussion of these addresses. The able leadership of President Sandford Bates was shown in the well thought out program and in its execution. His subject of "Protective Penology" delivered at the first session, presented most fitting key words for the sessions that followed.

Among other suggestive topics heard were "Criminology and Common Sense," "Co-operation in Criminal Justice," "Education in Prison," "Crime and the Public," "Crime and Its Correction from the Standpoint of Prosecutors, Wardens, and other Officials," "The Home Care of Released Prisoners," etc.

More than ever was said about the deplorable idleness existing in nearly all prisons of the United States. Several Wardens, when asked the greatest need in their institutions, promptly replied: "Work for the prisoners."

The substance of this crying need was set forth by the President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association in these words: "The state is at

enormous expense to maintain its convicts. All of them should work, and repay this cost. The support of dependents and the earning of a fund to assist a discharged prisoner to rehabilitate himself, are of equal importance. Continuous employment will raise the morale of our penal institutions."

Thus many leaders of thought and action discussed this subject, but Minnesota alone could point to a successful solution of the problem.

A proposal being advocated by Collier's Weekly was regarded as largely fantastic and impractical by prison men of experience.

But the Congress did declare itself on this subject more definitely than heretofore. This may at least be considered an augury of better things, and also serve as a program for definite action in future; and after stating that work for all prisoners is obviously desirable, "as much for the protection of the public as for the prisoner," the resolution states:

1. The work should be such as to teach the prisoner some self-sustaining occupation.

2. It should be so arranged as to interfere as little as possible with free industry.

3. Supplying the needs of the state and its political divisions is a perfectly defensible utilization of the labor of state charges.

4. While it is realized that the prisoners owe the State the product of their labor, it is nevertheless clear that better and more production can be secured, lessons of thrift, perseverance and self-reliance more readily taught and the public better protected through the training for citizenship of the prisoners, if a wage system, properly safe guarded be installed in the prisons.

5. Prison industries should be conducted under the best modern business standards of supervision and direction, including cost accounting, up-to date machinery and equipment, clean and healthful surroundings and workmen's compensation.

6. Due consideration should be given to colony care for certain classes of prisoners to afford out-of-door activities, including roadmaking, farming and such manufacturing labor as can be done in the open air.

The perennial topic of Parole found a few critics, but many champions. All agreed as to the value of the Parole Law and the Intermediate Sentence as constructive legislation. Objections were aimed chiefly at faulty administration of these laws. Just as Mazzini said: "The cure for civilization is more civilization," so the "cure" for parole is more intelligent parole, and better supervision for conditionally released prisoners.*

Here again, the Congress declared itself in one of the outstanding resolutions of the meeting, and this pronouncement goes before the public as the united convictions of those who know the facts. Resolved that:

1. We continue to recognize Parole as an essential element in Protective Penology.

2. Emphasis should be placed not alone upon the indeterminate character of the sentence possible under a Parole system, but also upon the controlled method of release possible under Parole.

Resolved that: In all cases considered for Parole, information should be secured by the Paroling authorities from all public agencies. Such information should be held confidential.

Paroling authorities should actively cooperate with all agencies interested in or charged with the safe guarding of the public interests and safety.

Other resolutions were passed approving the classification of prisoners; the establishment of a Central Bureau of Identification; the improvement of the employed personnel in prisons, by civil service or other non-political method; condemning the dangerous sentimentalism of newspapers in the treatment of crime news; calling attention to increased drug addiction and asking for more definite knowledge on its relation to crime; co-operation in law enforcement; and urging a better understanding and more scientific treatment of the defective delinquent.

If any prison wardens still believe in brutalizing the prisoner, they were careful not to assert their views in public. The best way to insure against prisoners desiring to retaliate after discharge, it was stated, is to have a prison discipline that is at once "Fair, firm, frank and friendly."

An outstanding committee report was that relating to Workhouses, Jails, and Lockups. The Chairman, Dr. Hastings H. Hart, presented results of an exhaustive study of government prisoners in these institutions. He showed that in many counties the government is paying less than the cost of maintaining these prisoners. The only adequate remedy or proper provision was shown to be the building of Federal Prisons for misdemeanants violating federal laws.

Accounts of accomplishment in many American Correctional Institutions furnished cause for pride at progress made. On the other hand, the rehearsing of the old story of delays in courts, idleness, congestion, and corruption in county jails, the domination of politics in the administration of all too many correctional institutions, afforded food for serious thought and aroused one's impatient indignation that such universally acknowledged evils should so long survive.

But before action comes discussion and matured conviction. Therefore more power to the Prison Congress at Tacoma next year, and let every other forum keep alive the need for prison reform and crime prevention.

Chicago.

F. EMORY LYON.