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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM CRIME RECORDS

WILLIAM P. RUTLEDGE¹

Appointment of a Committee on Uniform Crime Records was authorized at the 1927 convention. Its membership is as follows:

Commissioner William P. Rutledge, Detroit, Chairman
Commissioner Alfred F. Foote, Massachusetts
Chief Jacob Graul, Cleveland
Superintendent Thomas Healy, New Orleans
Chief George G. Henry, Baltimore
Commissioner James W. Higgins, Buffalo
Commissioner Michael Hughes, Chicago
Chief L. V. Jenkins, Portland
Chief August Vollmer, Berkeley

The subcommittee designated for executive purposes consists of the chairman, Chief Graul, and Commissioner Higgins. In addition to the regular session of the entire committee, the subcommittee has met four times during the past year.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The first meeting, in July, 1927, at Briarcliff, New York, was devoted largely to the question of securing adequate financial support, which is now assured. The personnel of the committee was determined, and the general scope and work program mapped out, particular attention being given to the relation between police statistics and those of a judicial character. Formation of an advisory committee was authorized in order to insure the co-operation of agencies such as the Department of Justice and the Census Bureau. It has been constituted as follows:

Dr. Lent D. Upson, Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Chairman
Dr. Robert H. Gault, Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology
Dr. Charles E. Gehlke, Western Reserve University
Leonard V. Harrison, New York City
Dr. William Healy, Judge Baker Foundation
J. Edgar Hoover, U. S. Department of Justice
Dr. George W. Kirchwey, New York School for Social Work
W. M. Steuart, Director of the Census

¹Commissioner of Police, Detroit, Mich.; Chairman of the Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (Colorado Springs meeting, June 25-28, 1928).

The December meeting in New York was held for the purpose of engaging the services of a director of the research staff. The subcommittee selected Mr. Bruce Smith of the National Institute of Public Administration, New York City, on a full time basis. This decision was later confirmed by the members of the general committee.

The January meeting in Detroit considered and disposed of questions concerning disbursement and control of the committee's funds, and after extended discussion approved the tentative program. This program was then submitted to all members of the committee and was ratified by them.

The meeting at Cleveland, held in June, 1928, was devoted chiefly to a discussion of questions arising in connection with the projected uniform classification of major offenses. The City Managers' Association having appointed a special committee to co-operate with this committee, it was decided to add the chairman, City Manager C. M. Osborn of Kenosha, to the advisory committee. A similar invitation will be extended to the responsible heads of the several state bureaus of criminal statistics. The subcommittee also approved a proposal that it prepare a statement and schedules covering minimum standards for the annual reports of police departments.

A printed copy of the tentative program is submitted with this report. Briefly stated the program as approved involves study of the methods employed in collecting, compiling, and distributing (1) facts relating to offenses known to the police, i. e., criminal complaints, and (2) facts relating to persons taken into custody.

CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS

We believe that if the police departments represented in this Association can agree upon certain fundamental facts concerning the maintenance of complaint records, the way may be opened toward securing a more accurate impression of the volume of crime and its geographical distribution. If this is to be accomplished, it will be the duty of the committee to do two things.

1. It should prepare suggested forms and procedure for recording criminal complaints. We do not believe that it will be necessary for all police departments to adopt such forms and procedure in their entirety. Some departments now maintain satisfactory complaint records and we see no reason why such as these, for the sake of mere uniformity, should abandon their own systems which are al-

ready going concerns, though some degree of rearrangement may be necessary. By drawing upon the experience of these departments, the committee hopes to be able to prepare a system for recording criminal complaints, together with such detailed instructions as will make their installation a simple matter in any department which does not now maintain such records. The standard system adopted by this Association in 1922 will be used as a basis.

If uniform crime statistics are to be secured, there must be general agreement concerning the procedure to be followed in cases such as the following:

a. When a series of offenses is committed in a multi-family dwelling, such as an apartment house, some departments now list such offenses individually while others count them all as a single infraction.

b. Similar problems arise in connection with offenses committed *against* two or more persons at the same time and place, or

c. *By* two or more persons at the same time and place.

d. The methods followed in enumerating compound offenses differ widely.

e. The same may be said of offenses which follow in natural sequence to prior offenses, but after the lapse of appreciable time; for example, murder committed two or three weeks after a kidnaping but as a direct result of it. Should this be counted as one offense or two?

f. A certain number of criminal complaints are clearly without foundation in fact, and therefore should not be counted in police records. A uniform procedure for writing off such complaints will prove highly desirable and useful.

g. Procedure for recording auto thefts will require special attention. Whether "driving away" shall be recorded as a theft, or whether the record shall be kept open until the car is missing for 24 hours or more, is still an open and unsettled question.

These are but a few of the matters which it should be the business of the committee to inquire into, in order to secure a fact basis for the recommendations which we shall later submit to this Association.

2. Another question with which the committee will have to deal concerns the crime classification to be employed in compiling complaints. Such a classification should be uniform in at least some of its features. There are a few major offenses which have a special importance in all cities. Their precise limits differ somewhat in the

various jurisdictions, but it seems reasonable to suppose that because these offenses *are* of major importance, we as members of this Association can come to some agreement as to the way in which they shall be defined for the purposes of our records.

The committee is of the opinion that such an agreement should be based upon facts, and therefore may best be founded upon the statutory definitions provided in the several states. With this end in view, a preliminary study has been made covering 29 states and the District of Columbia. The facts developed by this study are available here in printed form. You may examine them at your leisure. After you have read the introductory portion of the pamphlet, the committee asks that you examine with particular care the schedule of offenses for your own state, if your state happens to be one included in the present study. The states thus far examined are as follows:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Alabama | 11. Maryland | 22. Oregon |
| 2. California | 12. Massachusetts | 23. Pennsylvania |
| 3. Colorado | 13. Michigan | 24. Rhode Island |
| 4. Connecticut | 14. Mississippi | 25. South Carolina |
| 5. District of Columbia | 15. Montana | 26. Texas |
| 6. Georgia | 16. New Hampshire | 27. Virginia |
| 7. Illinois | 17. New York | 28. Washington |
| 8. Indiana | 18. Nevada | 29. West Virginia |
| 9. Louisiana | 19. North Carolina | 30. Wisconsin |
| 10. Maine | 20. Ohio | |
| | 21. Oklahoma | |

For each of these states, there is a schedule which shows in detail the definitions which have been given by the statutes to the following offenses, with appropriate citations to the penal codes:

1. Felonious Homicides.
 - A. Murder.
 - B. Manslaughter.
2. Rape.
3. Robbery.
4. Burglary.

These offenses, of course, do not comprise all major crimes. Certain aggravated assaults will have to be added and also certain types of larceny. The work on these last is almost completed and the results will be sent to you at a later date.

By attacking the whole question in this detailed fashion, the committee believes that in the end a more realistic and therefore a more practical result will be secured. Later on when we present the suggested forms and procedure these will be offered because they appear

to be well suited to general police use and particularly well adapted to the end for which this committee was created. Finally, we shall later ask the Association to adopt a number of simple propositions on which there must necessarily be general agreement if we are to have any national crime statistics which are worthy of the name.

ARREST RECORDS

Much of what has already been said concerning criminal complaints applies with equal force to the record of arrests. The committee believes that from the statistical standpoint these can be given a greater general value if police departments secure the same kind of information concerning every offender taken into custody. If our arrest records are so maintained that the statistics compiled from them may be directly compared with the census bureau's enumeration of national and racial groups or of occupations, the net result will be something far in advance of what we now have.

CONCLUSION

This then is the program of your committee: To provide a means for securing better and more comparable records concerning criminal complaints and persons taken into custody. The tentative schedules which are presented at this time show substantial progress. While they deal only with the matter of classification, the question is such a large one and raises so many difficult problems that we thought it best to get it under way as early as possible so that all members of the Association might have adequate opportunity to examine it and criticize it. There is nothing final about these schedules. But they may give us something to study and to think about. Out of that study and out of that thought, there should arise suggestions and criticisms from the members of this body which will make the schedules more nearly fit the local problems of each of the 49 jurisdictions.

Much time and attention has been devoted to keeping the members of the Association informed as to progress made by this committee. Over 2,200 pamphlets have been distributed and just a few days ago the nature of our work was brought to the individual attention of the editors of daily newspapers in 232 different cities. While much has already been accomplished, there is much more which still remains to be done. The committee therefore asks to be continued, with instructions to report again to the Association at the 1929 convention.