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## INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF FINGERPRINTS

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER<sup>1</sup>

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The Division of Investigation, which in March, 1932, announced the initiation of a program designed to effect a more liberal international exchange of fingerprints, points out that the developments attending this exchange of identifying data have been so satisfactory that it has enlarged this activity to include all foreign countries desiring to cooperate therein, as well as all law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada which contribute fingerprints regularly to the Division.

The superintendents of identification bureaus of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Pretoria, Republic of Panama, Rumania, Southern Rhodesia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Turkey, as well as the superintendents of identification bureaus of all the territories and possessions of the United States such as Hawaii, Canal Zone, Philippine Islands, and Puerto Rico, have participated in this activity. An invitation has been extended by the Division to all law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and Canada, which transmit fingerprint records regularly to indicate to the Division the instances where they desire that foreign exchange be arranged and to furnish duplicate copies of prints to be relayed to the foreign countries. The numerous fingerprints received in the Division marked for transmittal to foreign identification agencies are an indication of the enthusiastic support which has been accorded this project.

The Division is of the opinion that to provide for a more comprehensive identification service further efforts must be made to ascertain whether the persons whose fingerprint cards are referred to the Division have criminal records in foreign countries. It is felt that the development of this international exchange of fingerprints should prove to be a further step in the cause of effective law enforcement, insure the regular receipt of criminal records of Americans arrested in foreign countries, and also provide for the completion of the records of citizens or natives of other countries, who may

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be taken into custody in the United States. The adoption of the plan outlined conforms to the existing policy of the Division in handling fingerprints, since any law enforcement agency which has referred a fingerprint record to the Division relating to an individual is kept informed as to his future whereabouts through the transmittal to the said agency of copies of letters in answer to prints received thereafter concerning him.

A recent identification affected through the international exchange of fingerprints affords an interesting illustration of the efficacy of this service. The fingerprints of Charles J. Drossner were received by the Division of Investigation from the State Penitentiary, Waupun, Wisconsin, on October 12, 1932. Drossner had been received at the penitentiary to serve two terms of one to five years to run concurrently, for the crime of forging and uttering. The fingerprints of this individual were forwarded to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, New Scotland Yard, London, England, by the Division of Investigation. Scotland Yard reported that Drossners fingerprints were identical with those of Jose de Braganca, who on November 12, 1924, had been sentenced at Rome, Italy, to serve seven months' imprisonment on a swindling charge, and who at present is wanted by the Paris police department on a warrant issued by the Examining Magistrate, Tribunal of the Seine on February 19, 1929, for forgery and making use of forged documents. The letter from Scotland Yard indicated further that it was believed extradition papers would be issued for Drossner alias de Braganca.

Subsequent to the receipt of the above information the Division was advised by the Prefect of Police at Paris, France, that Drossner had been arrested in 1918, at Paris on a charge of issuing a check without funds and illegal wearing of decorations. It was also disclosed that this individual in 1922, was arrested at Bayonne, France, for a similar offense under the name of Douglas Campbell. Previously he had been arrested for theft in Rome, Italy, under the name of de Bracanza, and in Vienna, Austria, for identification purposes. A confidential report which accompanied the Paris information indicated that in 1918, Drossner was sentenced to serve six months and fined 500 francs for abuse of confidence. He was expelled by Ministerial Order in August of that year. On November 9, 1922, he was sentenced to serve six months and fined 4000 francs for issuing a check with no funds, infraction of an expulsion order, and illegally wearing decorations. The confidential report further indicates that

on May 13, 1932, Drossner was sentenced to penal servitude for life and a fine of 3000 francs by the Assizes of the Seine, for forgery. The report contains the statement that the subject defaulted at the time of this arrest. On the same date that the Paris report was received by the Division, advice was received from the Minister of Justice, Brussels, Belgium, giving a criminal record for Drossner similar to that outlined above but reporting the additional aliases of Charles Jean Drossner, Douglas Campbelle, Jose Brancanza, Jose Carlos Brazanca, Daniel Chester, and Vincente Montoya. The above mentioned cases is an illustration of the readiness with which the facilities of the Division of Investigation enable law enforcement agencies to secure the complete record of an international criminal.

A second case which has come to the Division's attention is that concerning Charles Lawrence Conway, who, under the name of David C. Conway was arrested by the Police Department at Los Angeles, California, on April 30, 1932, charged with auto theft. Conway was sentenced to a term of five years and placed on probation and ordered to serve the first two years in the County Jail. On July 20, 1932, he was taken into custody by the U. S. Immigration Service at Los Angeles, because of illegal entry. Deportation proceedings were then instituted. He was ordered deported to England, and the New Scotland Yard officials have indicated that his criminal record began in 1915, when he was arrested for stealing a revolver. In 1924, he was arrested charged with shopbreaking and larceny, and given six months hard labor. Later in 1924, he was bound over on probation for theft of a bicycle. He was sentenced in 1925, to serve three years on a charge of officebreaking after a previous conviction of a felony. In October, 1926, he was sentenced to serve three years, to run concurrently with the 1925 sentence, on a housebreaking and larceny charge.

Also, during August of 1932, the Division received from the Director of the Judicial Police at Brussels, Belgium, the fingerprints of one Frank Jansko, held in custody in Antwerp, Belgium, on July 12, 1932, charged with attempted larceny. According to the Division's records, this individual, also known as Joseph Sehec, Frank Lanik and John Edward Etkins was sentenced to serve two and one-half to ten years in the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington, in 1915, for attempted robbery. In 1919, he was sentenced to serve one year to life in the State Prison at San Quentin, California, for the crime of robbery, and in 1928, he was received in the State Penitentiary at Salem, Oregon, to serve seven years for grand larceny.

This extensive criminal record was furnished to the Belgian Officials at once in connection with the disposition of charges against Jansko in Belgium.

The Immigration Bureau of the Department of Labor has been so impressed with the results which have been accomplished and which may attend the international exchange of fingerprints that instructions were issued on September 28, 1932, to its various agencies requiring that a copy of each fingerprint record, taken by Immigration Officers in the cases of aliens arrested for deportation for cause, be referred to the Division of Investigation for transmittal to the interested foreign countries, so the deported persons may be kept under surveillance.

The action of the Division in the development of the plan to provide for the international exchange of fingerprints is an elaboration upon the service which it has given to all law enforcement agencies. The Division's criminal identification activities have been increased tremendously since it assumed this important work on July 1, 1924, when largely through the efforts of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Bureau was authorized to receive, file and exchange criminal identifying data, and as a nucleus for its work received a total of 810,188 fingerprint cards which previously had comprised the collections of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

When the Division began its identification activities there were only 987 contributors of fingerprint cards, who were transmitting approximately 300 records each day. A steady growth has been experienced in this work since the year 1924. On September 1, 1933, there were 6,066 contributors of fingerprints, forwarding about 2,200 cards each working day. Federal, State, and local officials, including sheriffs, chiefs of police, and wardens of penal and correctional institutions, and numerous foreign officials, are numbered among these 6,066 contributors. About 45% of all criminal fingerprints received are identified with previous records, contrasted to the 14% of identifications made in 1924. In contrast to the 87,918 fingerprint cards received in 1924, there were forwarded 574,258 cards to the Division during the fiscal year of 1933. On September 1, 1933, there were 3,870,910 fingerprint cards in the Division's archives, the largest collection of criminal records in the world. The Division's index cards numbered 4,996,568 on that date, compared with less than 1,000,000 in the files when the work was assumed in 1924.

The large number of law enforcement officers and agencies