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Editorials

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As this issue was going to press it was learned that Prof. Andrew A. Bruce, President of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, died in Chicago, December 6, 1934.

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EDITORIALS

PRISON DISCIPLINE AND PRISON ATHLETICS

Recently there appeared in a popular magazine an unwarranted attack by an alleged ex-convict on Warden Frank D. Whipp of the Joliet, Illinois Penitentiary and in which he was credited as being a ruthless disciplinarian. On the other hand, both in Illinois and elsewhere we every day read and hear reckless statements in regard to the so-called molly-coddling in our prisons and in our penitentiaries and constant sneers against the use of prison radios, prison athletics and prison entertainments. Few, however, realize that both severity and molly-coddling, if there be such, are the inevitable result of our appalling lack of prison employment. At any rate, so far as we have been able to observe, nowhere is there in America any real attempt to meet this problem, either by obtaining a market for prison products which may lead to employment, the proper and humane employment of prisoners in outside public work, or the extension of prison training schools which may properly fit the inmates to earn a living after their release. We have, in short, surrendered to the labor union and the prison commercialist, without any realization of what that surrender means and implies.

In an editorial in the February number of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology we justified the use of prison radios, prison athletics and prison entertainments on account of their educational value. We called attention to the fact that as sooner or later practically all of our prisoners will have to be returned to society and the purpose of our terms of imprisonment must of necessity be in a measure that of reform. It is foolish indeed to believe that a convict will, on his release and after a long term of years, be able to readapt himself to the life outside the prison walls, if in the interim he has been kept entirely ignorant of the growth and movement of that outside world and has spent years in an absolutely unsocial environment. Here we wish to call attention to the necessity of the use of athletics as a very means of discipline and of prison self-protection.

We cannot possibly permanently confine our prisoners to their

cells. Such a practice would not only be inhuman but it would lead to insanity and the grossest immorality. This is especially true when, as is the case at the present time, the majority of our prisons are greatly overcrowded and at Joliet, Illinois, for instance, three to six men occupy one cell.

If they are released from their cells they must be watched and guarded. If they were employed in workshops or in other occupations this would be comparatively easy except for the fact that in most of our prisons the numbers of our guards are grossly inadequate.

If they are not employed, however, the problem is a great deal more difficult. Recently the writer visited the Penitentiary at Joliet. There he found the prison to all appearances well run and organized and meticulously clean. It could be kept meticulously clean because the number of men who could be kept busy scrubbing and polishing was practically unlimited. But outside of scrubbing there appeared no work to be done. A handful were employed in the factory for making automobile license plates, but only a handful. The furniture factory which could have employed hundreds of men was closed for lack of orders. A few men were employed in the kitchens and in other service work. Some were employed in the business office. The great majority, at least 75 per cent, were doing absolutely nothing or puttering at trivial jobs, which puttering was as demoralizing as idleness itself.

The Warden of the Penitentiary was not to blame. He wanted to put the men at work but there was no work for them. He would have been willing to have inaugurated any feasible plan for trade or other instruction but no facilities were given him with which to operate.

To him it appeared that athletics furnished a partial solution of the problem.

If the men had been allowed to wander around at large they would have been up to all kinds of mischief and could not have been watched. There were buildings, there were hillocks, there were depressions in which they could have concealed themselves. Everywhere and necessarily there were not merely stones but pieces of metal with which they could have armed themselves. You cannot, for instance, have an automobile license plate factory without having some loose metal which may be turned into knives.

If the men could be turned into the level and open athletic field

they could not only be kept occupied but they could be guarded by a few men. One machine gun could have swept the whole enclosure and there was nothing behind which the men could conceal themselves.

Not only is this the case but athletics themselves are law promoting. Some years ago the writer formed the acquaintance of a British brigadier-general who had a reputation in the whole army for the excellence of his discipline. On being asked how he brought it about the general replied that it was a very easy thing. "I use athletics," he said. "The way to keep the guard houses empty is to keep the athletic fields full. When men are engaged in sport they are not cutting loose. The first thing that I do when I get a regiment or a brigade into camp is to open up the athletic field."

There is much in this suggestion. Either we must keep our prisoners employed in some kind of industry or we must give them some occupation for the leisure hours which we force upon them.

ANDREW A. BRUCE.

THE POLICE EXECUTIVE

"I hear that Allman is to go!" This simple statement has been passing from mouth to mouth for nearly three years. It is heard everywhere—in the police system, around the courts, and at the luncheons for business men. No one seems to want Allman to go but there is an ever present feeling that the man is too good to last in the exacting, difficult work of Police Commissioner for the City of Chicago. Rumor has it that the politicians would have ousted him long ago but for his extraordinary following among the prominent citizens. Once a favorable opportunity arises we are led to believe that he will be supplanted by another more given to "cooperation" with political chieftains. Everywhere it is said by knowing gentlemen with arched brows and shrugged shoulders, "I hear that Allman is to go!"

Of course these rumors may be groundless and we sincerely hope that they are, but it is thought that much would be gained if the uncertainty of Mr. Allman's tenure were ended. Rumors are always present in police circles but none are so devastating in effect as those concerning the security of position of the police executive. The purpose of this editorial, then, is to anticipate trouble. Generally editorials are written in protest after the event or act criticized has happened. Editorially we lock the barn door after the horse is stolen.

This comment is written to direct attention to the fact that the barn door should be locked before the horse is stolen. Chicago has an excellent police executive whose work seems to have satisfied the policemen themselves, the State's Attorney, the Crime Commission and the Citizens' Police Committee. He has a wide-spread and unique reputation for absolute honesty, the prime requisite for the police executive. Moreover, his tactful handling of the political machine has resulted in a maximum of departmental efficiency with a minimum of scandal. Not only should he be retained in office but all rumors and whispering campaigns should be ended as soon as possible.

The Chicago Citizens' Police Committee was formed in 1929 to study the Chicago Police System. During that year and the one following a survey was conducted by Mr. Bruce Smith of the Institute of Public Administration and an efficient staff. There appeared in 1931 a volume entitled "Chicago Police Problems" in which the Chicago police system was accurately described and a future program set forth in a chapter of recommendations. But the work of the Chicago Citizens' Police Committee did not stop there. The recommendations of the Survey have been very largely put into effect. In October, 1931, James P. Allman was made Police Commissioner and quietly but efficiently he proceeded to install as far as possible the set-up advocated by the Survey staff. Early in this year the Institute of Public Administration through Mr. Bruce Smith issued a supplement to the Survey entitled "Chicago Police Problems—An Approach to Their Solution." This study is unique in several respects but chief among them is that it is a "follow-up" of a survey showing what has been accomplished and reiterating some things which remain to be done in the future. In the foreword of this study, Dr. Gulick, the Director of the Institute, states: "To Commissioner Allman we are especially indebted for the courageous and judicial spirit with which he has approached the difficult problems which the staff has presented to him from time to time, and for the intelligent and practical dispositions which he has effected. Out of a wide acquaintance with American police administrators, we would select Commissioner Allman as one of a very few outstanding leaders in police management." And in the text there appears this statement: "Chicago at last has a police commissioner in whom are combined practical experience, vision, integrity, decision, and administrative competence. These qualities have been responsible for recent major advances in police service."

Chicago has had thirty chiefs of police since 1871, an average of a little over two years for each chief. Preceding Allman's appoint-

ment there were fifteen chiefs in thirty-one years. The Chicago practice of short tenure for police executives was heartily condemned by the Illinois Crime Survey and it was there recommended that the head of the police system should be appointed for an indefinite period with "*removal only for cause after a public hearing.*" Writing for the Wickersham Commission in the Report on Police, Professor August Vollmer says: "Police morale is built on a foundation of honest, intelligent and continuous leadership. No factor has contributed so greatly to police demoralization as has been the practice of limiting the tenure of department heads." The police executive has a task of tremendous difficulty and it requires years to become acquainted with the problems which he must attempt to solve. Efficiency within the department demands the retention of the chief long enough to utilize to the fullest degree his experience which, of course, can not be built up over night.

Nothing demoralizes a police force so much as the constant turnover in the office of police executive. As Professor Vollmer says: "A 'tilt the lid' policy by one head, followed shortly by a 'close down' order issued by the next chief, and this in turn by a 'wide open' police order of the third chief, is quite enough to wreck any police organization. The policemen who obeyed the order of the first chief will be punished by the second; those who obeyed the order of the second will certainly be punished by the third, and so on until the department is broken up into a series of cliques and these cliques spend most of their time fighting each other instead of fighting crooks."

Chicago has a police commissioner who seems to be doing an excellent job of making more efficient a police department which has for many years been in a state of turmoil. Constant rumors that he is slated to go, while unfounded in fact, probably make his position more difficult and keep alive within the department that uncertainty which is opposed to efficiency. It is submitted that something should be done by party chieftains to set these rumors at rest.

NEWMAN F. BAKER.