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EDITORIAL

CHIEF JUSTICE HARRY OLSON

On August 1, 1935, passed away in Chicago, HARRY OLSON, former Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of Chicago. His service to the progress of Criminology in the United States merits for his memory the deepest respect from all concerned with that science.

Born in Chicago in 1867, he attended Washburn College, Topeka, came to Chicago and graduated at Northwestern University Law School in 1891. In 1915 he received the honorary degree of LL.D. from Washburn University and in 1923 from Lake Forest University.

In 1891, upon leaving the Law School, he was admitted to the Bar, and became an assistant, later First Assistant, in the office of State's Attorney for Cook County. There he served for ten years, making a noteworthy record for initiative, vigor, and masterly conduct of investigations and trials. When the Municipal Court of Chicago was established, in 1906, he was with general approval nominated and elected as its first Chief Justice. The constitution of this Court, as a flexible organ of justice, was then unique in this country, and has served ever since as a model for imitation in other large cities. He was three times re-elected, ending his last term of service in 1930.

It was during his first term as Chief Justice that the opportunity was afforded to his progressive mind to render a most signal service to criminal science. In 1909 took place in Chicago the first National Conference on Criminal Law and Criminology, called to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Law School of Northwestern University. That conference, attended by more than 100 delegates, voted to organize the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology; and the Institute began its career by appointing five research committees to report on five important topics. The Committees were labeled with letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, D, and E), and each was manned by experts in several branches of experience,—law, prisons, psychiatry, sociology, etc. Committee A was entitled, "On a System for Recording Data of Criminals"; its task being thus phrased: "Investigation of an effective system for recording the physical and moral status and the hereditary and environmental conditions of delinquents, and in particular of the persistent offender; *the same to contemplate, in complex urban conditions, the use of consulting experts in the contributory sciences.*"

It was this last clause that was to be significant of a new epoch in administration of criminal justice. At that time the idea of uniting law and psychiatry in a criminal court was unheard of, here or elsewhere.

Committee A, when appointed, had for its chairman, Professor Edward Ross of Madison, Wisconsin (sociologist), with Horace Brown of Madison, Wm. Healy of Chicago, Harold Moyer of Chicago (physicians), D. P. Macmillan of Chicago (psychologist), Arthur MacDonald of Washington, D. C. (anthropologist), F. Emory Lyon and John L. Whitman of Chicago (penologists), and Harry Olson (judge),—each of them thoroughly experienced in his line, but never before assembled in this way in the common cause of criminology. Later the personnel was partly changed; Harry Olson became chairman, and the new names included James R. Angell, Robert H. Gault and H. H. Goddard (psychologists), Willard Hotchkiss of Chicago (economist), John Koren of Boston (statistician), and Frank Randall of St. Cloud, Minnesota (penologist),—names all of them outstanding in the doings of the last 25 years.

Committee A's first Report, made in 1910, outlined a practical system for making case-studies of delinquents; it was soon out of print; and in April 1913 a second report was published, revising the first in the light of experience. These two reports, representing the united views of the entire Committee, were drafted by Dr. William Healy, then director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute of Chicago, and now for some years past director of the Judge Baker Foundation of Boston; his later work has received world-wide recognition.

The first Report was instantly appreciated at its full significance by Chief Justice Olson, with his quick perception of all progressive ideas. It set forth a practical program available for application in the criminal courts. The Committee's charter (as above quoted) contemplated "the use of consulting experts in the contributory sciences." But in the criminal courts there had never been such a thing as the use of a psychologist to assist the judge. It was unprecedented,—nay, unthinkable! But not so for Judge Olson. He perceived that it was precisely what the criminal court needed. And so he proceeded, under the special powers of the Chief Justice, to establish such a post in the criminal branch of the Municipal Court. He went east to inquire into the methods and personnel of psychiatry, conferred with leading psychologists, and brought back with him, for appointment to the new post, Dr. William J. Hickson, a young psychiatrist of high standing and wide experience, who rendered there a long term of excellent service.

The sequel can be read in the annals of our metropolitan justice since that date. The idea was slow in spreading; but the example of the Chicago Municipal Court stood there for all to behold and study. Little by little the idea became an accepted truism. Not many cities have in fact yet got to the point of having a psychiatrist on the regular staff of the criminal court. But the propriety of it is no longer doubted. It is an orthodox proposition.

This practical example of calling psychiatry to the aid of the law has had beneficent reactions in many directions. How novel it was in 1910 cannot be appreciated today by the new generation. The pioneer courage and intelligent insight, needed to establish that first example, was that of Chief Justice Harry Olson. The science of Criminology everywhere owes homage to his memory.

JOHN H. WIGMORE.



ADDITIONS TO THE EDITORIAL STAFF

Since the publication of our last number the following additions have been made to the editorial staff of this Journal: Fred E. Inbau and Ernest W. Burgess. The former is Instructor in Police Science in the Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory in Northwestern University. During several years he has collaborated with the staff and has made important contributions to its pages. Mr. Burgess, since 1916, has been Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor of Sociology in the University of Chicago. His criminologic researches and his writings have attracted wide interest by reason of their fresh and substantial quality.