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Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

Crimes in the U. S., 1940-1941—The estimated number of major crimes in the United States during 1941 was 1,531,272, an increase of 14,246 (0.9 per cent) over 1940.

Murder increased 0.3 per cent; negligent manslaughter, 3.5 per cent; rape, 2.2 per cent; aggravated assault, 4.0 per cent; larceny, 1.9 per cent; and auto theft, 7.0 per cent. Robbery decreased 6.7 per cent and burglary 4.4 per cent.

Average figures for cities divided according to size disclose several exceptions to the general proposition that the larger cities have the highest crime rates. Cities with 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants reported more crimes of murder, aggravated assault, and larceny per unit of population than the average city with more than 250,000 inhabitants.

During 1941, the average city with population of 50,000 to 100,000 experienced increases in all crime classes except burglary. With all cities divided into six groups on the basis of size, the number of auto thefts per unit of population showed an increase in each of the six groups.

With cities divided according to location, the 1941 crime record shows burglaries, larcenies, and auto thefts committed most frequently, in proportion to population, in the Pacific States, whereas robberies, aggravated assaults, and murders occurred most frequently in the East South Central States. For auto theft, all sections of the country showed increases in 1941 except the West North Central States, which showed a decrease despite the nation-wide average increase of 7.0 per cent. These variations are a reflection of the truth that the extent of crime in a community, like other social phenomena, is determined by many factors.

The average value of property stolen per offense of robbery was \$112.37; for burglary, \$60.56; and for larceny, \$28.84. The average automobile stolen in 1941 was valued at \$458. In auto thefts, recoveries were effected in 95 per cent of the cases, whereas slightly less than 22 per cent of other types of property was recovered. The average value of property stolen per offense was higher in 1941 than in 1940.

During 1941 the F. B. I. examined 630,568 fingerprint arrest records. Age 19 predominated in the frequency of arrests and was followed in this respect by ages 18, 21, 20, and 23 in the order indicated. The records revealed that 33.0 per cent of all robberies, 46.6 per cent of burglaries, 33.3 per cent of larcenies, and 57.6 per cent of auto thefts were committed by youths under 21 years of age.

Women were represented by 9.2 per cent of the total records. The corresponding figure for prior years was: 1940—8.5 per cent, 1939—7.6 per cent, 1938—6.8 per cent.

The scope of the problem of the criminal repeater was again shown by the figures reflecting that 213,027 of the total of 630,568 persons represented had records showing 238,937 prior convictions of major crimes and 391,975 convictions of less serious violations, a total of 630,912 prior convictions. Fifty-one persons were arrested for criminal homicide during 1941 whose records showed prior convictions of murder or manslaughter.

More than 59% of crimes in 1941 were larcenies; 21% burglaries; 11.9% auto thefts; 3.1% robberies. Thus almost 96% of offenses were for the purpose of obtaining property.

More than 58% of robberies were on the highways; 33.9% involved oil stations, chain stores and other commercial houses. Almost one half of the burglaries involved residences.—From *Uniform Crime Reports, Fourth Quarter, 1941*.

National Probation Conference—The thirty-sixth annual conference of the National Probation Association met in New Orleans on May 7 to 16 in conjunction with the National Conference of Social Work.

The war time function of the nation's probation officers, parole officers and juvenile courts was one of the dominant themes of the probation meeting.

Dr. Roscoe Pound, Dean Emeritus of Harvard Law School, President of the Association and one of America's leading legal thinkers, spoke on the evening of May 8 on: "The Rise of Socialized Criminal Justice." Margery Fry, J.P., of London, formerly a governor of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Principal of Somerville College, Oxford addressed the opening session that was held jointly with the Association of Juvenile Court Judges of America. Her subject was: "Delinquency in Wartime England." The British government sent Miss Fry to the Conference to present England's experience in combating the increase of delinquency and crime during war.

Other distinguished speakers included: Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson, Jr., United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Houston, Texas; Judge Walter H. Beckham, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Miami, Fla.; Judge Walter S. Criswell, Juvenile Court, Jacksonville, Fla.; Judge Anna Veterans Levy, Juvenile Court, New Orleans; Robert M. Hill, member of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, Montgomery, Ala.; Joseph Y. Cheney, member of the Florida Parole Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.; Richard A. Chappell, Chief of Probation, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, Washington, D. C.; Robert C. Taber, Chief Probation Officer, Municipal Court, Philadelphia; Ralph Hall Ferris, State Director of Probation, Lansing, Mich.; Joseph H. Hagan, Administrator, State Division of Probation and Parole, Providence, R. I.; Mrs. Edna G. Johnson, State Director of Probation and Parole, Montpelier, Vt.; Ralph S. Banay, M.D., Chief, Department of Psychiatry, Sing Sing Prison, Ossining, N. Y.; Walter R. Chivers, Professor of Sociology, Morehouse College, Atlanta; Robert C. Edson, State Director of Probation and Parole, Jefferson City, Mo.; Frederick Moran, Commissioner, State Board of Parole, Albany, N. Y., and Alice Scott Nutt, United States Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

Y.C.A. in California—The California Youth Correction Authority has announced two immediate projects. The first is a plan of segregation of psychopathic cases at the Preston School of Industry by establishing a psychiatric clinic properly staffed. The second project is a study of court records in every county to give a complete picture of the extent of crime among young offenders of the age group within the jurisdiction of the Authority (eighteen to twenty-three years). It is not expected that work with individual cases will begin before August 1.

The three members of the commission are O. H. Close, superintendent of the Preston School, chairman; Karl Holton, chief probation officer of Los Angeles county, and Harold Slane, Los Angeles attorney. Mr. Close and Mr. Holton were appointed by Governor Olson at the prescribed \$10,000 salary. Both have decided that they are needed in their regular jobs, particularly in view of the war situation, and in a spirit which has been everywhere widely commended they have offered to serve on the Authority without pay. An act of the legislature was necessary to authorize this.

The state personnel board has created a classification of secretary-clerk at a salary of approximately \$3600 a year for the Authority, and Mr. Close, according to a newspaper announcement, will later ask for an executive secretary as a civil service exempt post at a higher salary than that for the clerk.

Juvenile Court in Connecticut—A state juvenile court was established by the 1941 legislature, effective January 1, 1942. The state is divided into three districts, each presided over by a separate judge. These judges have recently been appointed by the governor, as provided for in the act. They are Max Spelke of Stamford, Thomas D. Gill of West Hartford, and Fred D. Faulkner of New Haven, the latter serving as presiding judge.

Each district has its own director of probation and probation staff. An examination was held, according to the provisions of the law, as a basis for probation appointments, although this is not under the state civil service. The following appointments have been made in accordance with this procedure: Richard D. Roberts of Bridgeport formerly of the probation staff of the juvenile court of Fairfield county, is director of probation for the first district, covering Fairfield and Litchfield counties; Frank J. Barry, formerly chief probation officer of the juvenile court in New Haven, is director of probation for the second district, including Middlesex, New Haven and New London counties; William N. MacKay, who has been director of public welfare and supervisor of case work in Norwich, is director of probation for the third district, covering Hartford, Tolland and Windham counties.

A position not specifically provided for in the statute, that of coordinator of probation for the entire state, went to Mrs. Frances L. Roth of New Haven. Other appointments are being made. Under provisions of the act all probation officers on the job on January 1, 1941, are to be continued without examination at salaries not less than their salaries on that date and with their retirement rights protected.

Youth Court in New York—An important bill has been introduced in both houses of the legislature to create a "Youth Court" as a third division of the Domestic Relations Court of New York City. The court now has two divisions, the Children's Court with jurisdiction in all children's cases up to the sixteenth birthday, and the Family Court dealing with nonsupport cases. The new division as proposed would have exclusive jurisdiction over youths above the juvenile court age and up to nineteen. A new category is created, that of "youthful offender," which is defined as a youth who violates any law, except where the violation is punishable by death or life imprisonment, or where the offense is a traffic violation less than a misdemeanor.

Hearing and treatment of youths must be entirely separate from that of children and adults in the other divisions of the court. Special judges, probation officers, detention quarters and other facilities are provided for. The procedure of the youth court will be almost identical with that of the children's court, involving preliminary investigation, probation and commitment to special institutions. The court is authorized to waive jurisdiction and transfer any youths to the criminal courts if in its judgment the youth, because of the nature of his offense or character, is not amenable to the social processes of the court. The young defendant may also demand a jury trial in the regular criminal court.

The bill has the backing of a legislative committee headed by Senator Fred A. Young and a special New York committee appointed by former district attorney Thomas E. Dewey. The new court as created, if the bill becomes law, will succeed the present adolescents' courts operating as divisions of the Magistrates' Court in two boroughs.

The Young Commission has introduced numerous other bills to improve and make more uniform the various children's court laws of the state. Through a special committee appointed by the American Law Institute, the Youth Correction Authority bill has again been introduced.

Association on Crime and Delinquency in Mississippi—A statewide conference of the new Mississippi Association on Crime and Delinquency was

held in Jackson December 6. Edwin B. Zeigler, chief U. S. probation officer at Gulfport, is secretary of this organization. The conference was designed to stimulate public interest in probation, parole and prison management, and to prepare the way for a constructive plan for a statewide combination of adult probation and parole. Approximately one hundred persons from over the entire state attended—judges, law-enforcement officers, attorneys and social workers. The association authorized the appointment of a legislative committee.

A paper on parole prepared by Joseph W. Sanford, warden of the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, was delivered by the Associate Warden, Ben Overstreet, Jr. Judge Alex Smith, chairman of the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, presented to the conference an outline of the Alabama setup. Francis H. Hiller addressed the conference twice and consulted with state officials. The president of the association for the coming year is Judge L. C. Corban of Biloxi; Mr. Zeigler continues as secretary.

Length of Detention in New York City—The New York Law Society's study, "The Forgotten Adolescent" gives some statistics concerning the length of detention for 1938, its figure applying only to youths from 16 to 21 in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens who were charged with felonies and serious misdemeanors. Of 2,227 cases considered in the year ending June 30, 1938, 78 per cent were committed to a city detention prison for at least a short period while 64 per cent, comprising about three-fourths of those held for some time in a detention prison, were discharged, acquitted, placed on probation or given suspended sentences. The Law Society's statistics for the length of detention of these youths showed that approximately 88 per cent spent more than a month in prison awaiting a hearing or trial. The detention time for felony cases alone would average longer.

Checks made by the Society for the Prevention of Crime in the adolescent wing of the Queens City Prison in April 1941 indicated that the average length of detention of all boys of 16 to 21 held there was 37.6 days. A similar more extensive check made by the Department of Correction in the Raymond Street Prison in 1939 for adolescents held on felony charges showed an average length of detention of 88 days. It is generally agreed that detention for adolescent boys has been shortened in recent years as criminal arrests and trials have decreased.—From the *Society for the Prevention of Crime*.

The Negro Delinquent—In a paper under this title read at the thirty-sixth annual conference of the National Probation Association in New Orleans on May 8, Walter R. Chivers, of the faculty of Morehouse College, Atlanta, analyzed some of the causes of crime and delinquency among his own race.

"Policy racketeering has gained social approval in too many Negro families of all grades. It is grounded largely in a philosophy of economic despair and prospers in the hope that one 'lucky hit' will compensate for lowered living levels or furnish the initial leap out of poverty. It is justified by many Negro ministers, business men, social workers, and teachers. The 'successful' Negro numbers-bankers are given social status by being referred to publicly as real estate operators, merchants or just business men. Children, therefore, are frequently encouraged to join their families in playing a dream, hunch, or sacred hymn number. The hymn might turn out to be 'Steal Away To Jesus.'"

Reviewing some of the injustices to which Negroes have been subjected, the Atlanta professor dwelt particularly on the attitude prevailing among many juvenile court officials toward Negro delinquency.

"First," he said, "they tend too often to deny the designation of delinquent to Negro youthful offenders. To many of them, all Negro (law) violators

. . . are criminal regardless of age. In the second place, they do not seem to think that Negro youth is biologically capable of learning to react positively to the identical reform-therapy as white youth. A third attitude is due to the colossal error in judgment which leads them to conclude that they know Negroes. Consequently they frequently fail to give full value to the Negro probation officer's diagnoses and suggested therapy. Then, finally, many court officials, who are accustomed to accept the Negro probation officer as authoritative on cases where the offenses are those of Negroes versus Negroes, become emotionally beclouded when the offenses are those of Negro versus white youth."

The speaker turned to the "unmorality" of underprivileged or "disadvantaged" Negroes. "These Negroes," he explained, "are relatively impervious to the total community concept of right and wrong, as well as the advantages of such codes as regulate societal rights and duties. Consequently many of their activities, which are typed as criminal by the dominant groups, are not conceived of by them as such and are not thought of as adversely affecting society-at-large.

"Because of this unmorality these Negroes are avoided as much as is humanly possible by the moral Negroes and thoroughly misunderstood by the dominant race conscious group."

The Red Cross and National Morale—The American Red Cross by Congressional Charter is "To act in matters of voluntary relief and in accord with Military and Naval authorities as a medium of communication between the people of the United States of America and their Army and Navy."

To this end it employs field directors on military reservations and in hospitals who are responsible for a welfare program with the able-bodied, the sick and wounded, and civilian employees of the Army and Navy. These staffs are augmented by medical, psychiatric and other social workers and recreation workers in Army General and Station Hospitals and in Naval Hospitals and Training Stations. Besides having these workers who can be in daily contact with the men of our armed forces while on duty, the Red Cross also has throughout the country chapter home service workers who can be in touch with families and relatives as needed. Because of this service which enables the soldier or sailor to be "in communication" with the people on the home front, the Red Cross builds up the morale of our service men and of their families at home.

Recognizing the importance of mental as well as physical health for those in our armed forces, the medical officers of both branches of the Service are constantly bringing to the American Red Cross many requests for psychiatric information to be obtained from relatives through Red Cross home service. Studies are being made for the purpose of discovering how those men who have not adjusted in the service could in the future be detected by the Selective Service Boards or in the induction centers.

Some of those who have been found to be unfit for Army or Navy duty are persons with too low a level of intelligence, or who have obvious neurological conditions, frank psychoses, or fully developed neurotic conditions. Generally unstable persons, sex delinquents, chronic alcoholics and individuals with prepsychotic conditions or certain psychosomatic syndromes have also become "psychiatric casualties" when placed under the pressures and restrictions of military life. Obviously eliminating these possible "casualties" early will increase the effectiveness of the armed forces, save the taxpayer money, and most important, help to avoid the breakdown of the individual soldier or sailor and the consequent difficulties of adjustment after his rejection because of "inaptitude."

There are many individuals who can fill very adequately certain positions in civilian life who are not fitted for military and especially combat service. Likewise in "total war" such as the present one, it is extremely important that all human resources are used to the fullest extent possible; therefore the reorientation of the individual who has been rejected from military service is absolutely essential, not only for his own good but because his services are still needed. Local communities need to be aware of the resources available for the further treatment of those who have been rejected by the services, and of the fact that this "rejection" does not mean that the person cannot now or may not be able in the future to fill another place—if understanding help is given in his readjustment.

Red Cross hospital social workers are requested by the medical officers to obtain social history information to be used in the diagnosis and treatment of the patient. Interpretive letters are sent to Home Service workers telling about the patient's illness and explaining why this background information is desired. These workers interview families, relatives and friends not only for the sake of providing a social history for the medical officers but also to help the family understand the problems of the patient and to offer assistance in meeting any difficulties which may have arisen or might result in the future. Likewise the hospital worker interprets to the medical officer the patient's home situation and plans are made for his future, depending on the recommendations of the doctor.

Therefore Red Cross hospital and home service workers may aid in the prevention not only of maladjustment within the service because of worry about personal and family affairs, but also may help to readjust the individual not fitted for service. Home service workers, through letters from hospital workers, are provided with an understanding of the individual's problems, the reasons for his discharge, and advice concerning how this and his other problems may be handled in the community. They help to spread the knowledge that certain people are unsuited for the vocation of combat war, and that there are many other ways in which a person can help bring our country to victory. Such interpretation to families and local communities will help them to accept the men who are returned from the Service, and thereby may prevent future difficulty which could be of serious consequence.

Does Penal Treatment Develop Habits and Character?—Mr. Edwin B. Zeigler, Chief U. S. Probation officer at Gulfport, Miss., in a recent communication to the Editor has raised the question: "Does Penal Treatment Develop Constructive Habits and Character"? In that connection he has made an interesting comparison among factors that affect individual development in penal institutions and in everyday community life as the average person finds it. The differences are so wide that penal life can obviously not be expected to have the salutary effect that the average outside community may have. Compare correspondingly numbered items under the following sub-titles:

In a Penal Institution a Man:

1. Has no responsibility for securing his food;
2. Has no responsibility for paying house rent;
3. Has no responsibility for clothing himself or his family;
4. Has no responsibility for entertaining himself;
5. Undergoes a suppressed sex life;
6. Is told when to go to bed, when to get up, when to eat, and when to shave;
7. Has free medical attention (for himself only);
8. Is told to whom he may write and what he may say;

9. Is told from whom he may receive letters, the kind of letters he may receive, and what visitors he may see;
10. Cannot assume financial responsibility for wife and children;
11. May have his house back home to burn down; his child may be desperately ill; his mother may be at the point of death; or his wife may need an operation; but there is little or nothing he can do about it;
12. May worry about the needs of his family back home, but cannot share the hardships with them;
13. Cannot get whiskey to drink;
14. Associates exclusively with law violators;
15. Has no intimate daily face-to-face contacts with his family;
16. Cannot develop a feeling of being on his honor, or of being fully trusted;
17. Temporarily evades the emotional effects of facing a loss of constructive social status;
18. While a prisoner, is the only one subject to reformation. His family, be it ever so weak or immoral, is not touched.

In Every-Day Life a Man:

1. Must have money to pay board or buy groceries;
2. Must have rent money or there will be no house in which to live;
3. Must have decent clothes for his children to wear to school and should have a Sunday outfit for himself and each member of his family;
4. May choose the pool room, cheap dance hall or the bootleg joint, or may choose wholesome amusements;
5. Has unlimited opportunities for expression of sex life;
6. Has to work out his own daily schedule of sleeping, eating and personal habits;
7. Must have (1) inadequate medical care, or (2) accept charity medical treatment, or (3) be burdened frequently with heavy medical expenses for himself and family;
8. May write or say anything he wishes to anybody;
9. May receive anything anyone may wish to give or send him, and may see anyone he chooses;
10. Has full responsibility for support of self and his family;
11. Is relatively free to take whatever course he may feel compelled to take in order to provide for the emergency needs of those dear to him. Most men, good or bad, will slave, fight and die for the welfare of their homes and the ones they love;
12. Experiences first-hand the joys and troubles of his family;
13. Has unlimited sources of whiskey, coupled with frequent invitations to get drunk;
14. May choose his associates, good or bad;
15. Has opportunities for constructive family relationships;
16. Is entirely on his honor and is trusted;
17. Realistically faces public disapproval for his crime and early begins to adjust himself to it (when on probation);
18. While on probation, is *not* the only one subject to reformation. The behavior of his wife and children receive simultaneous and often equal attention.

Monthly Trends, Offenses Known to the Police (Daily Average), 1941—
—The seasonal variations reflected by the 1941 crime record were generally similar to those in 1940. Crimes against the person in most instances show opposite seasonal trends to those reflected by crimes against property, according to the monthly reports received during 1941 from 387 cities in the United States with over 25,000 inhabitants.

With reference to offenses against the person, the highest daily crime average was seen in the third quarter of 1941, with July the peak month for murder, August the peak month for aggravated assault, and the highest number of rapes in September. In the case of negligent manslaughters, however, the fourth quarter of 1941 was predominant, with December the peak month.

This variation in the record for negligent manslaughters is quite similar to the record for prior years, and this is to be expected, inasmuch as the frequency of automobile fatalities has generally been high during the fourth quarter of the year as the result of less favorable driving conditions. The large majority of negligent manslaughters consists of automobile fatalities.

As previously indicated, the 1941 seasonal variations were generally the same as those in 1940, but in 1941 the seasonal fluctuations were more marked in crimes against the person, with greater differences between the months showing the lowest and highest daily averages. This is especially true of negligent manslaughter.

Robberies and burglaries were most frequent during the first and fourth quarters of 1941, with the highest daily average in December. The seasonal variation in robberies and burglaries was more marked in 1941 than in 1940, with a greater range between the highest and lowest months. The larceny record for 1941 followed quite closely the general pattern observed in 1940, with each quarter of the year showing a higher daily average than the preceding one. The peak month in larcenies in 1941 was November. It may be noted that in years prior to 1940 the monthly variation in larceny figures was generally such as to indicate low points in the second and third quarters of the year.

The auto theft record for 1941 disclosed the highest number of such crimes in the third and fourth quarters of the year with peak frequency occurring in December. The second quarter of the year witnessed the lowest daily average of such crimes.

In reviewing the data, it is seen that the fourth quarter of 1941 witnessed the highest daily average of negligent manslaughters, robberies, larcenies, and auto thefts, and that December was the predominant month in the number of negligent manslaughters, robberies, burglaries, and auto thefts.

The foregoing facts point to the need for each law-enforcement agency to compile and study its own figures regarding monthly, weekly, daily, yearly, and geographical variations in the occurrence of crime within its jurisdiction. The many forces contributing to the commission of crimes are not static, but are, on the other hand, subject to constant change, with the result that those charged with the responsibility of combating crime must persistently study its various manifestations in order to more efficiently carry out a preventive and remedial program. This is especially true in time of war because of the numerous and rapid modifications occurring in the social and economic features of many communities. It may be noted that an increasing number of police departments regularly prepare and use the types of tabulations mentioned for the purposes indicated.

Auto thefts, which increased 7.0 per cent in 1941, are likely to continue to increase in 1942, unless owners take greater precautions against thefts. The likelihood of an increased number of auto thefts in 1942 is indicated by the monthly trends coupled with the discontinuance of automobile manufacture.

Similarly, larcenies which increased 1.9 per cent in 1941 also are likely to continue to increase in 1942.

The analysis that has been presented in this bulletin indicates that 17.9 per cent of all larcenies in 1941 were thefts of automobile accessories, whereas the corresponding figure in 1940 was 14.2 per cent. This classification

includes, of course, automobile tires, and there is an obvious danger of increased thefts of automobile tires as well as other parts and accessories, because of the restricted supply of these materials as the result of war conditions.

With reference to the robbery classification, it was noted that the highest frequency of such crimes occurred in the fourth quarter of 1941. A similar condition existed in the robbery figures for 1940. Yet the robbery total for 1941 showed a 6.7 per cent decrease as compared with 1940. From this it appears that the high frequency of robbery in the fourth quarter of 1941 should not necessarily be taken as an indication that this type of crime will tend to increase in 1942.—From *Uniform Crime Reports, Fourth Quarter, 1941*.

An Honor for Sanford Bates—Sanford Bates, member of the New York State Board of Parole since 1940, and formerly Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons from 1930 to 1937, was presented on May 22 the first Herbert C. Parsons Memorial Award "to be granted annually in recognition of outstanding achievement in the treatment and prevention of crime."

The award, established by the United Prison Association of Massachusetts, was announced at the Third Annual Dinner of the organization held at the Hotel Vendome in New York City. The presentation was in the form of a scroll.

The Award Committee consisted of Cornelius P. Trowbridge, President of the United Prison Association of Massachusetts, Eleanor Glueck, Dr. Augusta Bronner, Judge Delano Putnam, Reuben L. Lurie, and Louis Lyons of the *Boston Globe*.

Commissioner Bates, a lawyer by profession, first became identified with the field of criminology in Massachusetts where he was Penal Institutions Commissioner, and later Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections for ten years. Mr. Bates, who is President of the American Parole Association, is a past President of the American Prison Association and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Probation Association. From 1937 to 1940 Mr. Bates was Executive Director of the Boys' Clubs of America—a period of great activity and growth for the organization.

Oklahoma's Sterilization Law Invalid.—" . . . there is a feature of the (Oklahoma) Act that clearly condemns it. That is its failure to meet the requirements of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment."

The foregoing is from Mr. Justice Reynolds who delivered the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Jack T. Skinner v. The State of Oklahoma* declaring the sterilization law in that state invalid. The published decision has been received too late for this number of the *JOURNAL*. It will be printed in July-August.