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## Current Notes

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## CURRENT NOTES

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V. A. Leonard, *Editor*

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**Differentials in Crime Rates Between Negroes and Whites**—Holding that comparisons generally made of criminality between negroes and whites are not comparisons of similar things, one investigator has recently completed a study of racial variations in delinquency and crime rates of four socio-economically equated areas in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. Comparable socio-economic status was considered of basic importance in the selection of control groups. Four neighborhoods, two white areas and two negro areas, chosen for this study revealed striking resemblances as to physical characteristics, including geographic location, architectural pattern of housing, age of dwellings, size of lots, street lighting and physical deterioration of structures. The indices used to equate the four areas follow: a. Race—predominance of either a white or negro population; b.—similar sex distributions; c.—similar distributions by age groups; d.—home ownership and tenant occupancy; e.—major occupational patterns; f.—number of persons in household; g.—patterns of heating, refrigeration, etc. The subject matter of the investigation involved the question as to whether differentials in crime rates persist even in the face of the equation of areas.

The study began with the basic assumption that most comparisons of crime rates do not take into account differences in socio-economic status between the groups compared. The number of felony cases was accepted as a fairly reliable index to the extent of criminality. Although there was evidence of a general similarity in the pattern of offenses between negroes and whites, the study revealed a persistence of higher crime rates among negroes. This was especially true with respect to offenses involving loss of life. Commenting on factors conducive to criminal behavior among negroes, the author of this study recognizes the continued role of poverty in its various manifestations. He found that life among negroes in the areas studied had been reduced largely to organic survival. He states: "The reflex of this is an organic plane of living. This poverty is more than economic; it is pervasive in character: bad housing, overcrowding, restricted areas of settlement, limited outlets of expression, including recreation and employment. Although white areas were characterized by low economic status, the negroes with generally fewer resources have correspondingly heavier economic drains on their limited means than a comparable white group in a similar socio-economic class. Out of these and similar conditions arise elements conducive to greater criminality, as well as other forms of pathology among the negro population."—Earl R. Moses, *Differentials in Crime Rates Between Negroes and Whites, Based on Comparisons of Four Socio-Economically Equated Areas, American Sociological Review*, August, 1947.

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**Greater Emphasis on Parole Planning**—Establishment of the position of parole director on the staff of the National Probation Association is a new adventure in planning for the development of parole on a nation-

wide scale. The American Parole Association for some time maintained a consultative service for administrators, but the parole division which is now being established differs from similar undertakings in some major respects. Emphasis will be placed upon field service and study of parole systems as they are administered on a functional basis. In practice a parole system often diverges somewhat from the legislative blueprint, and the tangent taken may be highly important as a demonstration of the principal of natural selection in the administrative field. It is planned to make a state by state study of parole administration in order that a digest of practices and procedures of the entire professional field may be made available. The hope is expressed that frequent calls for service and for field studies of parole administration will be made so that parole boards can profit by the exchange of experience which this plan makes possible. It is held that parole administration in the United States is passing through an important period of transition and that continual encouragement must be given the evolutionary process in every state. One of the most important needs in the field of parole administration at this time is the gathering of material which may be used for teaching purposes. This was pointed out at the recent annual meeting of the Middle Atlantic States Parole Conference by Frederick A. Moran, chairman of the New York State Board of Parole. The systematic collection and classification of teaching materials will be one of the functions of the Parole Division.—*Probation*, June, 1947.

**Lobotomy**—Psychosurgery is a relatively new approach in the treatment of certain types of mental illnesses. The surgical procedure, known as bilateral prefrontal lobotomy, consists of severing the brain fibers that connect the frontal lobes and the thalamus. The frontal lobes are concerned with intellectual experiences while the thalamus is considered the emotional or feeling center. When the communication fibers are cut the interaction of the thinking and feeling factors in the individual are changed. For example, some patients who are depressed or over-anxious, or unduly fearful, have shown considerable improvement in their mental state following surgery. The new treatment is reported to have been introduced by Dr. Egas Moniz of Lisbon, Portugal, in 1936. Shortly thereafter, it was started in the United States, and the technique improved by Doctors Walter Freeman and J. W. Watts. Since then, psychosurgery has been performed by a number of neurosurgeons throughout the country with varying results.

Psychosurgery was started at Manteno State Hospital in 1940 and at Elgin State Hospital in 1941 (both in Illinois). At Manteno, a small series of cases has been observed for the past several years. Patients chosen for the surgery were far advanced deteriorated schizo-phrenics, and it was hoped that their mental status could be improved. The results to date in this group of difficult cases have not been encouraging. Of the 17 patients operated, two died following surgery, and no significant improvement was noted in the remaining 15. At Elgin, where a larger and more varied group of patients have received psychosurgery, the results have been more promising. Of the 45 patients operated there, 25 showed definite improvement in their ability to adjust to institutional routines, 12 improved so they could go home, 13 remained unimproved and seven died after surgery. Refinements in operative tech-

nique are being made and experience is being accumulated concerning the types of mental illness for which psychosurgery may offer hope of amelioration of symptoms and curative results.—Walter H. Baer, M. D., Superintendent, Manteno State Hospital, *New Lobotomy Program Begun, The Welfare Bulletin*, Illinois State Department of Public Welfare, July, 1947.

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**California Prepares for Intensive Crime Study**—Following the recommendations of Governor Earl Warren of California, the Legislature of that state recently authorized the executive to appoint specialized commissions for an intensive analysis of crime conditions. Governor Warren has indicated that he will name five commissions at the start to report on: a. California Criminal Procedure; b. Various phases of juvenile delinquency; c. Institutional care, parole and probation procedures for adults; d. social and economic conditions contributory to crime and delinquency; and e. Organized crime. Commenting on the work of the Commissions, the Governor stated, "Their job will be to study and point out the weaknesses in present methods, and to recommend improvements in procedures to the Governor and to the Legislature. In a state which has in a six-year period increased in population by two and a half million people, it is a matter of urgency that its methods in dealing with crime keep pace with reality."—*Editorial, The Prison World*, September-October, 1947.

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**University Training in Correctional Administration**—The Department of Public Information at the University of Notre Dame, has announced the appointment of Hugh P. O'Brien, formerly Administrative Assistant of the New York State Division of Parole, as director of the new curriculum in Correctional Administration at that institution. The announcement advised that the new curriculum will train students for probation, parole and correctional institution service. The program of training will cover a period of one year of residence work followed by a six months' internship leading to the master's degree in sociology.—*Prison World*, September-October, 1947.

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**The Congress of Corrections**—The 77th annual Congress of Corrections met in Long Beach, California, September 12-16, 1947. The theme topic of the conference was: prevention of delinquency by greater community responsibility. President Harold E. Donnell in his presidential address stressed the importance of mobilizing the community for preventive action. The Honorable G. Howland Shaw emphasized the importance of an effective family, religious, and community experience for satisfying the needs of the youth. Mr. Richard McGee made an outstanding statement of the personnel problems in correctional work. It should be considered as one of the most progressive statements on personnel policy that has come from administrators of correctional institutions. The training of police officers for handling juvenile problems came in prominently for attention. The Los Angeles County area is noted for its excellent development in this regard. It was agreed that Juvenile probation and parole officers represent a special career service, with a distinctive case approach. This approach separates them from the average social worker and makes them professionally distinct

from the trained police officer. Educational projects in correctional institutions were given much moral support at the conference. In fact these projects were considered as having unusual possibilities for social therapy and social re-education. The point was that the educational program of the institution had to be resourceful rather than standardized in terms of academic schooling and vocational training. An outstanding statement was made on a new set-up for training schools for delinquent youth. Hans Riemer contended that there should be specialized units of not over 150 boys in each to carry out the specific treatment program which was formulated for youth in the central diagnostic center. He advocated separation units for delinquent youths as the best agencies to prepare them for release.

Mr. W. J. Smyth, Jr. was elected president of the American Prison Association. The next meeting will be held in Boston at the end of August, 1948. One outstanding development which came before the business meeting was the endorsement by the Association of a plan to make a faithful and realistic commercial film of life in a correctional institution. At the final session of the Congress, Sanford Bates announced that the way was now paved for the application of the International Penology and Penitentiary Commission for admission under the social section of the United Nations. This was accomplished by the gracious withdrawal of Spain from membership in I.P.C.C.

Every one who attended the Congress was impressed by the programs, personnel, and installations of the Los Angeles County Probation Office, the Department of Corrections of the State of California, the Adult Authority and the Youth Authority as well as with the excellent development of probation, parole, and preventive work throughout the length and breadth of the state of California. There seems to be no doubt that the state will soon be in a position of leadership in progressive developments in penology and corrections, if it is not already there.—FROM WALTER C. RECKLESS, *School of Social Administration, Ohio State University.*

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**Pan-American Medicolegal Congress**—A new organization in the field of criminal justice, the Pan-American Medicolegal Congress, has made its appearance and the first general conclave will be held at St. Louis, Missouri, on January 19, 20 and 21, 1948. The forthcoming conference is being given wide publicity through proper channels and an attempt will be made to bring together for the first time workers from Pan-American countries who are interested in medicolegal subjects, with special reference to the laboratory aspects of this field. The new organization was perfected under the immediate supervision of Dr. R. B. H. Gradwohl, Director of the Research Bureau, St. Louis Police Department, who is chairman of the English-Speaking Section and the author of standard works in legal medicine. Dr. Israel Castellanos, distinguished criminologist and Director of the *Gabinete Nacional de Identification*, Havana, Cuba, is chairman of the Spanish speaking section. An extensive program is being arranged for the St. Louis Congress including the presentation of papers bearing upon recent research contributions to the disciplines of medicolegal practice. Within its specialized sphere of inquiry, the work of this new organization should

effectively supplement the broad agenda of the Latin-American Congress of Criminologists, which held its first meeting in Buenos Aires in 1938— (See this JOURNAL, July-August, 1947, p. 93).

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**Fifth International Congress of Pediatrics**—The Fifth International Congress of Pediatrics which was held in New York in July, 1947, is of interest not only to the field of medicine but to serious investigators of criminal behavior and dependency. Pediatricians from sixty-three countries gathered at this meeting to hear the reports of delegates concerning the child's bill of rights throughout the world. Although not represented directly at the conference, criminologists need little prompting to acknowledge the contributions that pediatrics is making toward a more complete understanding of the physiological and medical aspects of evolving criminal behavior patterns. Reports from some countries were disheartening. The Polish delegate, for example, told of sixty-eight percent of public school children aged three to seven years infected with tuberculosis with no hospitals for their care. It was encouraging to learn that the services for children established before the war stood Norwegian children in good stead during the occupation of their country. Preference in food distribution was given to young children and pregnant women, and additional welfare centers were set up to help the mothers in the care of their children. Nevertheless, due to general substandard rations and care, European children today average less than normal height and weight. As one commentator stated, perhaps pediatricians are specially internationally minded because they deal with the greatest internationalist of all—the infant who has no language.—*The Child*, September 1947, U. S. Children's Bureau.

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**Probation Job Training**—A program for the training of professional probation personnel in the Los Angeles County Probation Department has been successfully launched and is attracting widespread attention. Inquiries regarding the organization and operation of the program are being received from other sections of the country, indicating an interest on the part of probation departments throughout the United States in the long neglected field of probation job training. The program includes graduate level courses provided through the School of Public Administration at the University of Southern California. Courses offered recently included *Social Aspects of Delinquency Control*, given by Professor Norris Class, and *Criminal Law*, given by Harold Slane, Los Angeles Attorney and former member of the California Youth Authority.

Featuring visual training, the program insures a first-hand knowledge of the work of related agencies through the assignment of trainees to the Los Angeles Police Department and the Sheriff's Department for periods of two and three weeks respectively. There, they participate in the major functions of those departments, riding in night radio cars, observing arrest and booking procedures, investigational procedures, operations of the various bureaus, program of the city and county jail, and the work of the scientific crime detection laboratory. During the total training period of eighteen months, trainees also follow a similar pattern of observation and instruction at Juvenile Hall, the District Attorney's Office and at various other public and private agencies.

Trainees are developed for organization-wide fitness. Divided into two teams, one group training in the juvenile field awaits its turn to exchange places with another training in the adult field. After fourteen weeks, the teams are reversed so that each trainee will receive instruction in both juvenile and adult probation methods. Trainees are then assigned to the Delinquency Prevention Division of the Probation Department for two weeks and then begin regular supervised work in one of the Divisions. Upon completion of the program, trainees take a promotional examination to qualify for appointment to the professional level of deputy probation officer at a salary range of \$267 to \$327 per month. A regular position is reserved for each trainee at the time he enters training so that he can be assured of permanent employment providing he is successful during his training period and qualifies for the professional position.—*California Probation News*, January-March, 1947.

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**The Child With Problems in a City School System**—School administrators have long been aware of the maladjusted pupils in their classrooms, and workers in the field of criminal justice have long since recognized the need of focusing the light of research upon the endless flow of delinquent and criminal offenders from the ranks of the physically, mentally and socially different child of primary and elementary grade school age. Reminiscent of noteworthy contributions to the cause (see August Vollmer, *Pre-delinquency*, this JOURNAL, XIV, 2, Aug. 1923, pp. 279-283; and Nathan Bodin, *Do Problem Children Become Delinquents and Criminals?* same publication, November-December, 1936, pp. 545-559) is the joint report of Anna M. Engel and Harry J. Baker, *Socially Maladjusted Children in a City School System*, appearing in the April, 1947 issue of the *Journal of Educational Research*. The report draws in broad outline the plan now in operation in the Detroit Public Schools, and within the frame of reference of a plan at least, it appears indicative of a well defined trend in public school administration. According to the authors, provision for socially maladjusted children in the Detroit Public Schools is a cooperative program involving the Department of Special Education, the Psychological Clinic and Visiting Teachers, the Department of Guidance and Placement, and the administrative, supervisory and teaching staffs. Indirectly, it includes also cooperation with community agencies representing child welfare, health and protection.

The focal point of operations is the Department of Special Education which integrates the facilities for diagnosis and special treatment of three groups of children with problems—the physically, mentally and the socially handicapped. It is evident that all of these pupils need special treatment, training and guidance if they are to develop into worthwhile individuals. Total enrollment in this special program averages 7,944 pupils for full-time training; and 7,911 pupils receive part-time instruction in speech correction and lip-reading centers. Pupils presenting acute problems of discipline are recommended to Junior ungraded classes if they are younger than twelve years of age, or to one of three observational schools if they are older than twelve. The Junior ungraded classes have a very flexible program in which an

attempt is made to adjust the pupil in regard to his academic work as well as in his personal emotional reactions. An activity program has been most successful, with much more freedom than is possible in the regular grades; the rooms are equipped with work benches, tools and art supplies, as well as books and academic materials.

The three observational schools for older boys provide a diversified program, which includes, in addition to the academic work, metal and wood shop, printing, music, art and health education. Recommendations for transfer of pupils from both Junior ungraded classes and observation schools to regular grades are made when they are considered sufficiently adjusted for return. Some maladjustments are so deep-seated that the school has small chance of re-educating the pupil, and placement in the special school may then become permanent. Pupils in this group include the dull but not mentally defective child who is graded too high for his mental ability but too low for his physical development, and also the one who is emotionally so unreliable as to make regular grade placement a hazard. A follow-up study was made of 120 boys who had been returned to the regular grades. Sixty of them or 50 per cent, were later returned to the ungraded classes for further adjustment. The article contains an interesting analysis of the factors which appear to accompany successful adjustment and those characteristic of non-adjustment. Summarizing the results of the total program by combining the "good" and "fair improvement" into a "success" category, and the "poor" or "no improvement" into the less-successful category, the authors report the following data: For example, an evaluation was made as to school attendance. Of 1,376 pupils, 875 or 63.6 per cent made good or fair improvement, and 501 or 36.4 per cent made poor or no improvement. Of those reported for tardiness, 67.7 per cent showed improvement, as against 32.3 per cent with poor or no improvement. General scholarship improved for 66.4 per cent as against 33.6 per cent with poor or no improvement. The child's attitude toward the school improved in 73.2 per cent, and there was improvement in pupil-teacher relationships for 77.5 per cent. Good or fair improvement was noted for 77.5 per cent of the pupils in sociability and for 64.6 per cent in trustworthiness. A total of 71.2 per cent showed good or fair improvement for all behavior items, and 28.8 per cent revealed little or no improvement.

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**Diagnosis of the Type of Alcoholism**—Increasing awareness of the monstrosity of the jail sentence as the answer to any type of behavior problem is probably nowhere more apparent than in the realm of the alcoholic. The extremely technical nature of the problem is indicated in a recent article by Dr. Selden D. Bacon of Yale University, in which he states that diagnosis of the type of alcoholism or of the major background factors involved is essential for determination of the type of therapy to be utilized. There are many types of therapy: psychoanalysis, social casework, conditioned reflex treatment, psychological training, various modes of group therapy, social reorientation, religious conversion, superficial and deep psychiatric treatment, counseling, Alcoholics Anonymous, vocational rehabilitation, hospitalization, etc. To expect any one of these to effect rehabilitation for all individuals who

present the alcoholic syndrome is as ridiculous as to expect all sorts of headaches to succumb to one pill, whether they are due to anxiety, infection, sinus, stomach, or dental troubles.

Some types of alcoholism seem to call for long, expensive treatment; others respond to much simpler, less expensive techniques. As research develops more accurate diagnosis and provides more certain links between types of alcoholism and types of therapy, rehabilitation will become more effective, less expensive, more available and less time-consuming. Diagnosis of the type of alcoholism involved would seem to depend primarily on the understanding of two sorts of phenomena: a. the life history; and b. the drinking history, especially as it reflects personality factors. The first of these, subject of much study in the last 75 years, is usually undertaken by the psychiatrist and the psychiatric social caseworker. The second has received little or no scientific attention until the last 2 or 3 years, although empirical techniques have been worked out by recovered alcoholics.—Selden D. Bacon, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology, Yale University, *Alcoholism: Its Extent, Therapy, and Prevention, Federal Probation*, April-June, 1947.