International Penal and Penitentiary Commission Conference—The second post-war Session of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission was held at the Palais Federal in Berne, August 2-17. It was opened on behalf of the Swiss Government by Federal Councillor von Steiger, and was attended by some twenty delegates from the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Austria, United States, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland. China and Siam were represented by observers. The Executive Committee of the I. P. P. C., is constituted as follows: Mr. Sanford Bates (United States), President; Mr. Schlyter (Sweden), Mr. Rappaport (Poland), Mr. Beleza dos Santos (Portugal), Mr. Fox (Great Britain), Mr. Amor (France), Vice-Presidents; Mr. Cornil (Belgium), Treasurer; Mr. Delaquis (Switzerland), Secretary-General.

The numerous matters listed on the agenda were discussed under the presidency of Mr. Bates and various sub-committees proceeded with their studies, including the sub-committee dealing with short-term imprisonment and its alternatives; other sub-committees were concerned respectively with the problem of habitual offenders and their treatment, effects of war on criminality, unification of penalties, security measures in criminal matters, criminal statistics and other problems of institutional organization and administration. A preliminary question which has for some time engaged the attention of the United Nations and which simultaneously affected the fundamental statute of the I. P. P. C., was the membership of Franco Spain in the organization. Taking into account on the one hand the non-political traditions of the I. P. P. C., and on the other the fact that its future development was at stake, the President and the Secretary-General explained the situation to the Spanish delegate and the Franco Government voluntarily retired in order to facilitate matters. It should be mentioned that the I. P. P. C., has been asked in a general way to give to the U. N. O., its views regarding "those aspects of the problem of crime prevention and treatment of offenders which are suitable for international action and how such international action could be carried out most effectively." The text immediately prepared at the Permanent Office of the Commission was, in March 1948, presented by its President, Mr. Bates, to the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Social Affairs of the U. N. O.

Among important problems which engaged the attention of delegates was the short-term sentence. It was the subject of a resolution drafted by the Assembly of the I. P. P. C., in 1946, and confirmed at the 1948 session. The resolution pointed out that the concept of short-term sentences is quite relative. It varies according to the individual and to the nature of the offense committed. It may, however, be stated that all sentences of imprisonment which do not exceed a period of three months should be considered as belonging to this category. Experience has shown that in most countries, short-term sentences frequently do a certain amount of harm due to time limits, lack of facilities for diagnosis and short-term treatment and the traumatic effect of the first jail experience. When discharged, these petty offenders may experience difficulties in achieving social readjustment and may thus be pushed into committing
a second offense. It was the considered opinion of the Commission that the maintenance of certain short-term sentences can only be admitted if they are served under the following conditions: a. in a safe and hygenic establishment; b. that there should exist prophylactic measures against contagious diseases; c. that there should be an identification and brief social investigation; d. that a diagnosis be made of physical diseases; e. that the delinquents be examined by a psychiatrist; f. that there be a selected and experienced personnel; g. that measures be taken with a view to social rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the Commission was of the opinion that even should all these conditions exist, short-term sentences should only be inflicted in default of other appropriate repressive measures, such as suspension of sentence, probation and fines proportioned to the means of the delinquent. A resolution was also adopted at the 1948 session endorsing the assumption of active leadership by the I. P. P. C., in the development of improved prison conditions throughout the world; under the terms of the resolution, preparation would be made to render advice and assistance in the event of an emergency in any country whenever the principles generally agreed upon by the I. P. P. C., as sound were threatened.

In possession of formal invitations from Belgium and the Netherlands, the I. P. P. C., decided that one of the Benelux countries will be the seat of the XIIth International Penal and Penitentiary Congress in the summer of 1950. It was then agreed upon that the Netherlands would receive the Congress at The Hague or Amsterdam, to be followed by travel in Belgium for a visit to some of that country’s penitentiaries. The next session of the I. P. P. C., will be held at the same time and place as the Congress. (From a release by the Secretary of the Inter-National Penal and Penitentiary Commission, November 10, 1948.)

New Light on Contested Wills—The biological aspects of handwriting and its identification have never received the attention that they deserve. As reported by one investigator, testators are in the majority of cases people advanced in age who on one occasion or another have been under the care of a physician, usually a general practitioner. As the physician may be called as a witness or expert witness in cases involving contested wills, he should have a general picture of the questions with which he is likely to be confronted. If wills are contested, the evidence will deal primarily with a. the genuineness of the handwriting including the signature of the will itself, and b. the mental competency of the testator. Trained in scientific observation and perception, the physician may be able to give testimony of critical importance in handwriting cases. Expert opinions on the identity of handwriting are on the whole beyond the capacity of the physician, for he has no special training in this highly specialized area of investigation. He should, however, be able to evaluate and supplement or qualify the opinions of handwriting experts where they are insufficiently trained in the physiology, neurology and psychiatry of expressive movements. It is evident that handwriting identification based upon optical form alone may prove inadequate in some cases and may even lead to miscarriages of justice. The older French publications by Michon in 1869 and Crepieux-Jamin have been supplemented in this respect by the excellent contributions of French psychiatrists such as Rogues de Fursac in his Les Ecrits et les Dessins dans les Maladies Nerveuses et Netales, Paris, Masson, 1905. There has accumulated in the publications of neurologists, psychiatrists, physiolo-
gists and psychologists a very valuable fund of material for the diagnosis of the Parkinson Tremor, senile tremor, hysterical tremor and similar pathological conditions. Tremors due to supported handwriting or parietic handwriting are not difficult to diagnose. In his paper, *Graphology and Medicine* (Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, Vol. 100, pp. 381-401) Eliasberg has shown that anoxia of the brain due to various reasons such as cardiac failure, local circulatory disorder of the brain, pernicious anemia, various types of secondary anemia and kachexia, may be diagnosed from the handwriting while, of course, the etiological differential diagnosis cannot be made. He adds that these findings were verified by studies in experimental anoxia conducted mostly by physiologists.

Circulatory disorders may be permanent or transient. They may have existed under the influence of emotions during the short period in which the will was dictated or executed. As to competency, transient or general disorders must be judged and this can be accomplished only by individuals who are adequately trained in the biological sciences. Anoxias, for example, may be caused by various poisons. They may lead either to circumscribed defects as alexia, agraphia, apraxia, aphasia, agnosia or to transient psychotic episodes. Eliasberg describes typical cases in *Training and Healing after Apoplexy* (Clinical Medicine, Vol. 51, August, 1944) and outlines the technique of a test by which it is possible to show that an aphasic or agnostic patient is able to carry out complex processes of thinking (abstraction). (From Wladimir Eliasberg, M. D., Ph. D., 420 West End Avenue, New York City 24.)

High Percentage of Successful Paroles Cited—Illinois States Training School for Boys at St. Charles reports the highest percentage of successful parolees in the nation, according to Rev. Fr. Robert P. Donavan, Chaplain of the institution, in a recent address before the Catholic Men’s Club of Rockford. Parole violators, Father Donavan asserted, come into public attention more than the youths who leave the school to re-enter society and lead normal lives; the latter far outnumber those who revert to delinquency and become charges of the state. Most of the 18,000 boys who have gone through the School since 1902 are “good boys who learned bad habits,” said the priest. He explained that many in recent years have come from homes with adequate material wealth but which lacked family affection and parental guidance. Parents often fail to participate in the day-by-day lives of their children and neglect problems facing them until children become anti-social in their behavior. Activities important to children must become important to parents, the Chaplain said. No casual interest in doing good will help children back from the road to delinquency. *Illinois Welfare Bulletin*, July, 1948.

Trends In Alcoholism—If, as the New York Times reported some months ago, there are 750,000 “problem drinkers” in the United States (figures given out by the Research Council on Problems of Alcohol), uncontrolled drinking is a public health problem of major proportions. The council states that in terms of numbers of persons affected, and its impact upon health and social structure, it is a more serious problem than tuberculosis. Other newspaper reports support this contention. The Utah Tribune in Salt Lake City quotes Keith Wilson, state probation and parole officer, who cites alcohol as the chief contributor to the delinquency of men under his supervision. And the Cleveland, Ohio News reports alarm in the local juvenile court over the increasing number of
teen-age boys led into delinquency by intoxication. Court investigators
found that the youths were able to buy alcohol, principally wine, from
drug and grocery stores, from waitresses in taverns and from older
friends.

Dealing with the various addictions that follow a war, Dr. Ernst
Simmel, the noted German psychoanalyst, wrote on this subject shortly
before his death in California last year, an article for the Psycho-
Analytic Quarterly. Declaring that, "We may expect as an aftermath
of World War II the same psychological sequelae which followed World
War I," Dr. Simmel recalled the enormous increase in character dis-
orders after the first world war, and concluded: "During the war,
working and fighting for victory was the common goal for civilians and
soldiers alike, serving as a collective ego ideal, counteracting the blunting
of the individual superego. Postwar disillusionment with the ideal of
victory robs it of its significance and effectiveness as a stabilizing factor
within individual psychological systems, thus depriving the individual
egos of the supporting superstructure of a community spirit. The unified
nation again disintegrates into dissenting groups with disparate aims of
self-interest. The cessation of armed conflict is a narcissistic trauma for
all; deprived of the protective participation in an inspiring brother-
hood of man, no longer able to identify himself with the nation as a
whole, the disenchanted citizen finds that the bitter fruit of victory is a
return to individual, social and economic insecurity." Since addictions
offer a perfect way out for many individuals in such a situation, and
since alcoholic drinks are socially approved, alcoholism becomes the
common American addiction. "'Psychiatric studies of a great many
problem drinkers have shown that, aside from insanity and drinking to
deaden physical pain, there are just three reasons why alcohol is used to
excess: a. as an escape from a real life situation the drinker cannot face;
b. as a result of a defective personality or inadequate adjustment to the
normal course of life; c. as a development from controlled social drinking
to abnormal drinking.'" Focus, September, 1948.

The American Medicolegal Congress' Steering Committee—A meeting
of this committee was held in New York City on October 18, 1948. It
was called to order by its Chairman, Dr. R. B. H. Gradwohl. Professor
Ralph F. Turner of Michigan State College was appointed Temporary
Secretary.

The Chair briefly reviewed the St. Louis meeting of the Congress
(Jan. 19-21, 1948) and stated that he, by authority of the Congress,
appointed the Steering Committee which is representative of the forensic
sciences and of geographic sections of the country. The committee was
authorized to explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent organi-
zation for the mutual interest and benefit of forensic scientists.

Dr. Gradwohl invited each member present to express his views on the
aims and purposes of the projected organization. During the discussion
Dr. Jesse L. Carr presented a detailed outline of the organizational plan
of the California Institute of Forensic Sciences. Mr. William Holloway,
of legal counsel of the American Medical Association, reported on the
results of a survey which he had conducted through the offices of the
state medical associations.

In the course of discussion the following suggestions were made rela-
tive to the purposes of the proposed organization:
To raise the standards of investigative technics and the quality of testimony in court; engender the confidence and respect of the judiciary; promote the improvement of medicolegal testimony; create and foster the confidence of the courts in scientific legal proof; raise the standards of reliability in investigation and testimony of men who do this work; exchange of information, encouragement of research, and dissemination of knowledge; encourage enlightened legislation; see the ends of justice attained; improve the participation of scientists in the attainment of justice; aid in the enactment of legislation to improve the administration of justice; encourage the use of science in the administration of justice.

Dr. LeMoyne Snyder moved that the Committee take steps to form an organization on a national scale for the purpose of promoting the advancement of forensic sciences. The motion was carried unanimously. (This was a substitute for an earlier motion by Dr. Snyder, seconded by Mr. Ordway Hilton.)

In search of a name for the organization, a total of five were suggested. After discussion "The Academy of Forensic Sciences" was agreed upon.

Discussion of membership qualifications centered about a division of the members into two or more classes. It was the general opinion that each section of the Academy would be best suited to determine the membership qualifications within its group. Dr. Moritz described the qualifications of members of the Massachusetts Medicolegal Society.

Dr. Selling moved that two classes of members be agreed upon. Fellows, to be elected after selection and approval by individual sections, and a general member classification. Dr. Weiner amplified the motion to include members, fellows, honorary members and corresponding members. The amended motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

On motion by Dr. Selling, seconded by Dr. Freireich, the chair appointed a committee to draft a constitution and by-laws.

Drs. Helpern and Carr discussed the question what scientific and professional groups should be represented in the Academy. It was decided to include pathologists, psychiatrists, toxicologists, chemists, serologists, lawyers, sociologists, physicians, penologists, statisticians, photographers, laboratory technicians, police scientists and psychologists.

By motion, duly seconded and carried, the chair was authorized to appoint a committee to explore the possibility of an official organ, and to make arrangements for the publication of the proceedings of the next meeting. In the interim the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology will be used to carry articles and notes concerning the work of the Academy.

Dr. Moritz moved that the present temporary officers remain in office until an election of officers shall have been held at the first meeting of the Academy. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

The meeting then adjourned.—RALPH F. TURNER, Temporary Secretary.

Legislative Highlights of 1948—Massachusetts: The Youth Service Board has been established in Massachusetts (H. B. 2103, chapter 310). The board consists of three full time members serving for staggered terms of five years, appointed by the governor on recommendation of an advisory committee. The duties of the board are preventive in its aim to establish crime prevention programs. They are administrative in that
the board succeeds to the powers of the trustees of the training schools in administering the schools, and takes over from the State Department of Public Welfare its duties regarding care of delinquent and wayward children and school offenders. Hereafter juvenile court commitments shall be to the board rather than to the institutions. The juvenile court law was also amended in several respects by the same legislative act. 

**Virginia:** The legislature failed to enact a bill for the establishment of a statewide system of juvenile and domestic relations courts (S. B. 175). The bill would have set up seventeen districts with a special judge in each. It would also have established a juvenile court commission with general supervision of the district courts and with the responsibility of certifying a list of qualified lawyers to the general assembly from which the assembly would elect judges. The bill was redrafted to provide for a study of the advisability of establishing the system of district courts and in this form it was passed. 

**Louisiana:** A Louisiana bill did not pass (H. B. 404) which specified that the Department of Public Welfare shall provide juvenile probation service on request of the courts, and which authorized appointment of probation officers by the commissioner of public welfare in consultation with the judges. A bill was passed which gave to juvenile courts jurisdiction of all offenses including capital crimes committed by children under fifteen, and another bill was enacted to modernize the juvenile court law in accordance with procedural provisions of the Standard Juvenile Court Act (H. B. 402, 403). 

**Kentucky:** A bill (H. B. 437) to provide that the juvenile session of the county court in a proceeding involving a dependent or neglected child, may terminate parental rights, failed of passage, as did a bill (H. B. 240) to authorize appointment in first class cities of a friend of the court to protect the interests of children in divorce actions. Such appointment was authorized in 1946 for second class cities. 

**Federal:** The youth authority bill before Congress was H. R. 1680, S. 857. In addition to setting up a youth authority, the bill would have established a youth offender procedure. A Youth Authority was also proposed in the Board of Corrections Bill, H. R. 151. Other bills not acted on by Congress include H. R. 3210, for the care and return of runaway and vagrant children; H. R. 4646, a "Federal Youth Assistance Act," with an appropriation of $50,000,000 for aid to the states in promoting the health of youth and diminishing juvenile delinquency. Congress passed an amendment to the federal probation law providing that where a probationer goes from one district to another, jurisdiction over him likewise is transferred. 

The governors of three additional states have been authorized by the legislatures to execute the interstate compact for probation and parole supervision—Kentucky, Mississippi and South Carolina. Four states have not yet acted on the interstate compact—Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina and Texas. (See Interstate Control of Parolees, Current Notes. July-August issue of this JOURNAL).

**Mississippi:** A bill to authorize probation in Mississippi, one of the few states without an adult probation law, failed to pass (S. B. 186). The bill would have authorized probation for offenses punishable by not more than five years imprisonment. Sheriffs would have served as probation officers. **Missouri:** A bill to require a pre-sentence investigation in every felony case failed to pass (H. B. 481). **New Jersey:** The parole law (S. B. 12, chapter 84) enacted in accordance with the recently adopted constitution, establishes in the Department of Institutions an autonomous parole board of three members appointed by the governor with the advice
and consent of the senate, serving for staggered terms of six years. The chairman is a full time member. Sol Rubin, Legal Consultant, National Probation and Parole Association, Focus, September, 1948.

Police Advisor For Civil Defense Planning—John D. Holstrom, Chief of Police of Berkeley, California, and protege of the famed police consultant and criminologist, August Vollmer, has returned to his duties in that city from a leave of absence of six months, during which time he served as police advisor to the Office of Civil Defense Planning at the request of the Director, Russel J. Hopley. Chief Holstrom aided in the development of a civil defense plan for the United States to be implemented by legislation required for the establishment of a permanent civil defense agency. Under the general direction of the chief of the technical division of Civil Defense Planning, Chief Holstrom formulated, established and coordinated all specifications dealing with police measures to be utilized for civilian defense in the event of future enemy attacks. These plans include development of specifications for such programs as panic control, maintenance of order, traffic problems and identification of missing or casualties. He also participated in the development of a training program for auxiliary police which would provide the necessary guidance and advice in procedures. (The Police Chiefs News, June, 1948.)

Child Life Research—Criminologists note with interest the establishment of a clearing house for research in child life in the Children’s Bureau of the Federal Security Agency as an aid to research workers in keeping abreast with studies in progress. The clearinghouse has been set up in response to numerous requests from research workers and professional organizations who believe that such a center will promote collaboration and interchange of information on current research in the various fields affecting child life. Lack of a central clearinghouse has in the past been a handicap to many investigators because there has been no one place where they could find out about current projects in their own fields or related ones. Research workers agree that the availability of such information will encourage more cooperative planning, as it can be a communicating device for investigators in different specialties. The clearinghouse will provide a systematic way to keep professional people informed about research in progress, and to bridge the time-gap between completion and publication of work. The establishment of such a center grew out of a series of conferences held during the past year to review what is going on in research in child life, what the gaps are, and how the needs for research can be met. Representatives of many fields recommended that the Children’s Bureau develop a center for information about projects pertaining to children and mothers being undertaken by one or more of the various disciplines. The clearinghouse will canvass investigators in various fields for reports of studies in progress, including collections of unpublished data. A bulletin will be released in 1949 to inform research workers about on-going research in child life. The clearinghouse will provide information to research workers on request. Inquiries may be directed to Dr. Clara E. Councell, Director, Clearinghouse, Children’s Bureau, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C. (From a current announcement of the Federal Security Agency.)