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Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

V. A. Leonard, Editor

Unstable Tempo of Crime—By the end of 1949, crime across the Nation rolled up an annual total of 1,763,290 major offenses, according to estimates based on the reports of over 4,200 police agencies serving nearly 100 million inhabitants in the continental United States. *This was an increase of 4.5 percent over the figure for 1948.* On the average, there was a crime every 18 seconds and while the estimates include some larceny offenses involving property of small value, the figures do not include crimes of arson, carrying concealed weapons, embezzlement and fraud, and other serious offenses of the Part II classes, and accordingly, the estimates are considered conservative. During an average day in 1949 there were 293 persons feloniously killed or assaulted; 162 robberies were committed; over 1,100 places burglarized, more than 440 cars were stolen, in addition to 2,800 thefts under the general larceny classification. Increases were registered for each offense class except homicide and auto theft, with burglaries and robberies showing an 8.4 per cent and 7.5 percent increase, respectively. Larcenies were up 4.8 percent; aggravated assaults rose 2.0 percent; and offenses of rape were up 1.2 percent over the estimated total for these offenses for 1948. Compared with the previous year, murders in 1949 were off 8.3 percent and negligent manslaughter offenses down 9.5 percent. Auto thefts showed a decrease of 3.8 percent. The general increase in crime was 4.2 percent in the urban communities and 8.5 percent in the rural districts. Burglaries rose 6.7 percent in the cities and 17.5 percent in the rural districts, while robbery offenses showed a 6.4 percent increase in urban areas and a 12.7 percent increase in rural communities. Urban larcenies showed an increase of 4.6 percent, while in the rural areas these offenses were up 7.4 percent. Aggravated assaults and rapes rose 2.1 and 0.3 percent, respectively, in the urban districts and both showed a rise of 1.9 percent in the rural communities. Murders and negligent manslaughters declined 7.6 and 9.7 percent, respectively, in the urban communities, while murders decreased 9.2 percent and negligent manslaughters 7.7 percent in the rural communities. Auto thefts in the cities were down 2.6 percent and in the rural areas 5.0 percent. Of the 792,029 fingerprint arrest records examined during 1949, 9.9 percent represented arrests of women. Persons under 21 years of age represented 26.7 percent of those charged with robbery, 38.2 percent of those charged with burglary, 25.6 percent of those charged with larceny, 30.4 percent of those charged with rape and 43.8 percent of the persons charged with auto theft. Age 21 predominated in the frequency of arrests, followed by ages 22, 23 and 24 in that order.—*Uniform Crime Reports, Annual Bulletin, Volume XX, Number 2, 1949, Federal Bureau of Investigation.*

A Psychiatric Clinic at Utrecht—A Psychiatric Observation Clinic was inaugurated at Utrecht in November, 1949. On that occasion His Excellency the Minister of Justice for Holland, said, in part: "Of late years the need of psychiatric advice has been strongly felt. This is on the one side due to the growing development of the science of psychiatry and psychology, and on the other side to the increased possibilities which have been presented to the criminal courts when imposing punishment and/or taking measures. Especially the enforcement of the legislation concerning psychopathic criminals has played an important part in this respect. Furthermore, the improvement of the prison system, which resulted in a differentiation of the penal institutions and which necessarily led to the selection of prisoners, as well as the aftercare (ex-prisoners relief work), made the necessity of psychiatric advice more urgent."

Accordingly, about a year ago, the Ministry of Justice decided to establish a psychiatric observation clinic at Utrecht. This clinic—the first Government observation center for psychopathic criminals—has been placed under the administrative management of the remand house at Utrecht. The medical care is in the judicial psychiatric section of the University at Utrecht (with a medical, psychiatric and psychological staff and a number of nurses). Close contact will be kept with the medical faculty of the University and with the heads of the institutions for psychopathic criminals. In announcing this development, the Minister of Justice added: "In connection with this newly created possibility for clinical psychiatric observation the doctors attached to the remand houses and prisons will in the future have to pay more attention to the prevention of mental defects among the detained persons, which is sure to promote a proper penitentiary treatment. In medical university circles as well as from the side of the judiciary great interest is shown with respect to this unique centre of criminal-psychiatric examination. By putting this institution in operation the Netherlands have made up for their arrears with regard to what, in this line, already existed in many other countries, such as Belgium and the Scandinavian countries. With this institution the prison system has taken an important step on the road towards development."—From Dr. E. A. M. Lamers, General Director of the Dutch Prison Administration, to the Editor.

Second International Congress of Criminology—This Congress will meet at the Sorbonne, Paris, September 10 to 18, 1950. Professor Paul W. Tappan (Department of Sociology, New York University, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y.), is Chairman of the Committee for American participation. The General Secretary of the Congress is MM Piprot d'Alleaume (188 Avenue Victor Hugo, Paris—XVIe). The meeting of the Congress has been timed to fit in with the International Congress on Psychiatry which will be held in Paris, also, within the same month of September. The objects of the Congress are:

1. To provide a forum for the interchange and discussion of the knowledge and experience gained by the criminologists of all countries since the First International Congress on Criminology of 1938.
2. To survey the methodology of the sciences involved in criminology, and to discuss their contributions to an understanding of the causes of criminal behavior.
3. To collate the information presented to the Congress by each country and the ensuing discussions thereon, with the further object of defining the present position of criminology, its methods and scope.
4. To study the problem of the potentially serious offender.
5. To agree on desirable objects of future research, and to stimulate interest in them.
6. To further the development of the International Society of Criminology, and to discuss the establishment of an International Institute of Criminology.

Criminology is to be regarded, for the purposes of the Congress, as limited to the study of the aetiology, treatment and prevention of crime within the framework of all the relevant sciences. These will include—among other disciplines—biology, ethics, penology, psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and sociology. Forensic medicine and the study of police techniques of detection will be involved to the extent that they are relevant to criminology as above defined. Judicial problems are to be excluded, except where pertinent to the application of conclusions reached on each main topic discussed. To facilitate the fulfilment of the objects of the Congress, the programme has been divided into three distinct parts: a. An analytic study of the methods and results of criminological research in each science, with

particular attention to more recent developments; b. A further consideration of the data provided in "a," with special reference to methodology; and a discussion of *l'état dangereux*, or the problem of the potentially serious offender; c. A discussion of the establishment of an International Institute of Criminology. If such an institute is thought desirable, its organization and scope will be planned. Several social functions have been arranged for members and their relatives, including a reception at the commencement and a banquet at the conclusion of the Congress.—From MM Piprot d'Alleaume to the Editor.

Illinois Academy of Criminology—Judge Jacob M. Braude of the Chicago Municipal Court, for many years presiding judge of the Boys Court, has been elected President of the newly formed Illinois Academy of Criminology. Albert Weiss, of the University of Chicago, was elected Secretary. The purpose of the Academy, as expressed in the constitution adopted at the initial meeting, is to encourage the development and improvement of the study of criminology, to promote inquiry, research and publication in the various fields of criminology and to present the results of studies and researches by means of lectures, addresses and exhibits.

Membership of the Academy is divided into three classes—Fellows, Associates and Regular. All classes are subject to invitation and election. Only those who hold an advanced degree in a scientific discipline related to Criminology, or its equivalent or who have published scientific research studies or have made other significant contributions in the field of Criminology are eligible for election as Fellows. Associates are those who hold or have held administrative or judicial positions in bodies, institutions or associations which deal with the problem of Criminology or who display an active interest in the development of scientific procedures in that field. Students in the field of sociology, law, psychology and the like are eligible to become special student members. It is expected that the Illinois Academy will soon join with similar local or sectional groups to form the National Academy of Criminology which it is contemplated will be represented at and take an active part in the proceedings of the Second International Congress of Criminology, previously referred to in this issue of *Current Notes*.—From a recent news release.

Governments Delinquent in Narcotic Drug Reports to United Nations.—The Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the Economic and Social Council had its attention drawn to the fact that on May 16, 1949, the date of the opening of the fourth session of the Commission, annual reports concerning narcotic drugs were not being submitted by certain Governments. (Such annual reports are required by Article 21 of the Convention of July 13, 1931, for limiting manufacture and regulating the distribution of narcotic drugs.) The Secretary-General was requested to address a special circular *note verbale* to Governments who have failed to submit their reports for two years including the year 1947, calling attention to their obligations under Article 21 of the 1931 Convention to forward annually a report on the working of the Convention in their territories, and to the fact that this report is to reach the Secretary-General on or before June 30 of the year following that to which it relates, in accordance with the Commission's decision as approved by the Council. Those countries which since 1945 have failed to submit annual reports for two years including 1947, are: *Africa*—Ethiopia and Liberia; *Asia*—Afghanistan, Burma, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Siam, Syria and Transjordan; *Europe*—Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; *North and Central America*—Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

and Panama; *South America*—Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru.—*Bulletin on Narcotics*, No. 1, October 1949, Department of Social Affairs, United Nations, Lake Success, New York.

Recommendations by the Prison Association of New York—The Prison Association of New York, in its 105th annual report to the Legislature, urges that the State perfect a coordinated correctional system. Under a prefatory heading "Not plants, but programs; not prisons, but personnel" the Association recommends that this be accomplished either by a legislative review with the aid of technical consultants, or by a special committee appointed by the Governor. It is hoped that a long-range unified plan would result, placing New York's correctional techniques among the most progressive in the country. It is recommended that all male felony offenders, regardless of age, be committed direct to the Department of Correction rather than to specific institutions as is presently required. One of the first steps necessary in the coordination of the State's correctional system is to provide for the direct commitment of prisoners to the correctional department. Continuing, the report points out that ample precedent has been established by virtue of the commitment of all male felony offenders between the ages of 16 and 21 to the Elmira Reception Center. This law has been in effect since 1945, and experience has shown, according to the Association, that this procedure should not be bound by age limits. As a logical sequence to the foregoing recommendation, the agency is urging that Sing Sing Prison be designated as a reception institution now that the Green Haven Prison is open. The report states, "The activation of this recommendation would result in tremendous savings as has been demonstrated in other states and by the federal government."

The establishment of a new division of psychiatry within the correctional department is strongly urged. It is recommended that the division be headed by a competent psychiatrist, and that it should provide the leadership, daily services, treatment and research that has long been needed within the Department's classification and rehabilitation program. The Association reviews the current critical shortage of psychiatrists now employed within the State's thirteen penal and correctional institutions. There are twelve permanent positions as psychiatrist in the State's penal and correctional system, seven of which are vacant and have been so for many months. Emphasizing that the total starting salary of a qualified psychiatrist in the correctional department is \$5,232, including cost-of-living bonus, the Association states that "competent psychiatrists engaged in private practice today could well realize the annual correctional stipend in less than a month's time."

The Association urges the legislature to continue the life of the State Youth Commission, stating that the original legislation of 1945 establishing the Commission "represents one of the most advanced pieces of legislation ever adopted in New York State." The extension of the youthful offender law is recommended to include those nineteen and twenty years of age. Also, the Association recommends amendment of the law to permit youthful offenders to legally deny the element of arrest. The law now provides that youthful offenders may legally deny conviction but omits the factor of arrest which in an offender's later life nullifies the full intent and meaning of the law. It also urges legislative approval of a provision permitting certain youthful offenders, after a period of three or more years following discharge from probation, to apply for the return of fingerprint and court records pertaining to their determination as youthful offenders under the law. Other recommendations include requests for exploration by the Judicial Council of the question of legal aid to indigent offenders; periodic review of cases of those confined in the two institutions for defective delinquents at Woodbourne and Napanoch; compulsory treatment of narcotic addicts; provision for interns within the parole and correc-

tional departments, and the re-establishment of the guard training school. Also, the Association is recommending that the legislature authorize the Law Revision Commission to study and examine the sentencing processes of the various courts leading toward the removal of disparity of sentences, and concludes with a plea for legislative support of prison industries. "Competition with free labor is at the barest minimum," the recommendations conclude, and "work programs are mandatory for prisoners unless we care to return to the old and memorable days of prison riots and bloodshed."—E. R. Cass, General Secretary, Prison Association of New York.

Juvenile Court Statistics—Delinquency cases reported by juvenile courts in the United States for 1948 decreased slightly (2 percent) from 1947. This decrease was the smallest reported since the end of the war. Data on delinquency cases were obtained from reports received from courts which participated voluntarily in the Children's Bureau juvenile-court statistical reporting plan. Under this plan, State agencies (such as departments of welfare, departments of probation, and State juvenile courts) collect statistics on juvenile delinquency cases and other types of cases handled by courts that have jurisdiction in children's cases. For 1948, reports were received from 399 courts in 17 States distributed over every region of the country. Of a total of 94,236 children's cases reported by the 399 juvenile courts in 1948, two-thirds were delinquency cases and one-third were other types of cases, including cases of children who lack adequate care or support, cases of abandonment or desertion, abuse or cruel treatment, commitment of mentally defective children, and adoption proceedings. About half (51 percent) of all children's cases reported by the 399 courts were disposed of unofficially, that is, without formal judicial action. These unofficial cases were disposed of informally after conference at the point of intake or after more intensive social study and investigation. The other half were placed on court calendars for formal judicial action, after filing of a petition, complaint, or other legal paper used to initiate court action. The general trend in delinquency cases during the period 1938 to 1948 was upward during the war years, to a peak in 1945, and downward in the three years after the war. If the 1948 figures are indicative of the new postwar level, we are faced with a much greater number of children coming before the courts each year than was the case before the war. If the volume of delinquency cases continues at the 1948 level, some 275,000 children, it is estimated, will be coming before the juvenile courts each year in the United States. We need research to find out more about the conditions of children and of family life that lead to so large a number of court referrals, and to tell us how to remedy conditions that ultimately result in children's referral to court.—From a Preliminary Statement entitled *Juvenile Court Statistics*, Division of Research, Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., December, 1949.

Census Bureau Seeks Help of Prison Officials—Enumeration of persons confined in prisons for the 18th Decennial Census of Population, which started April 1, 1950, will enlist cooperation of wardens, sheriffs, chiefs of police, jailers and similar officers, according to the United States Bureau of the Census. Law enforcement officers were advised that imprisoned persons, although deprived of certain privileges by their convictions, still are counted for the purposes of apportioning representatives in Congress among the 48 states. It is the plan of the Census Bureau to employ selected enumerators to take the census in prisons, working with the cooperation of local authorities. Particular emphasis is laid by the Census Bureau on impressing prisoners with the fact that information given by them to enumerators is strictly confidential. Not even the President of the United States, the Federal

Bureau of Investigation, or the Internal Revenue Bureau will have access under the law to personal information given to a census enumerator by a prisoner.

Prisoners in federal penal institutions on April 1 are being enumerated through the use of information obtained from prison records, since these contain practically all the data needed. Regardless of the type of prison, however, district supervisors of the Census Bureau will solicit the active cooperation of responsible state or local authorities in obtaining census reports on everyone in their jurisdiction. Local census enumerators are instructed to obtain the required information at any prison with a minimum of interruption in its daily routine. Enumerators are reminded at the same time, however, that compliance with their requests for information is required by federal law.—*The Prison World*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January-February 1950.

An Honor for Professor Leonard—The Cuban Society of Police Science and Criminalistics has honored Professor V. A. Leonard, Editor of this section, by an award of the SPECIAL HONOR MEMBERSHIP DIPLOMA of the Society. This well deserved distinction is a recognition of Professor Leonard's "personal merits and distinguished efforts for the improvement of scientific police service and its important functions of social defense against crime and prevention of delinquency."—R.H.G.
