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# SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN PRISON ASSOCIATION CONGRESS

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WILLIAM T. CROSS<sup>1</sup>

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The American Prison Association meeting at Buffalo, October 7-12, 1916, registered probably the largest number of delegates in the history of the organization. It was notable for the high quality of addresses that were given and their appeal to popular attention. The older members in attendance remarked upon the seriousness and professional quality of its proceedings.

The association met under the presidency of Warden Arthur Pratt of the Utah State Penitentiary. The presidential address was devoted to a review of the values of the indeterminate sentence law and its use in Utah; to modern requirements of prison discipline; to the employment of convicts on road construction; and to the care of dependents of prisoners. Warden Pratt struck a note which resounded throughout the five days' discussions when he said: "The greatest and most effective prison reform is the one that will tend to uplift the man; that will educate and help him to control himself; that will strengthen his moral force, and give him power to resist temptation and wrong."

This acceptance of modern, more or less popular, ideas of prison reform—only with qualifications—stood out strongly in three other leading addresses. On the opening evening Superintendent of Prisons James M. Carter, of New York, referred to reforms recently at Sing Sing, saying that anyone who visits the place may observe an improvement in discipline as an effect of recent innovations in self-government: "But," said he, "we have had enough of sentimentality. It is time to take up the practical end of taking care of these poor individuals—those who are filling and will fill our institutions in the next few years." He gave a discouraging account of the operations of the state use system in New York, looked at from a business standpoint, saying that machinery was in use which according to modern industrial standards should have been scrapped years ago. He advocated wider use of the colony plan.

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The resignation of Mr. Thomas Mott Osborne from the warden-ship of Sing Sing during the meetings of the Prison Association lent interest to the appearance on the program of Governor Charles S. Whitman, whom Mr. Osborne had criticised. Governor Whitman, referring to his record of having prosecuted more criminals than any other man in the United States, nevertheless spoke as one who appreciates the human side of crime. He said, however, that the main objective of a prison system—namely, to punish for crime—should not be abandoned. His address was a philippic against sentimentality in prison reform.

Mrs. Maude Ballington Booth thrilled the congress with an appeal on behalf of the hardworking, practical wardens as they face criticisms and demands for ill-considered reform measures. "I wish," she said, "the dear public would kindly remember that the wardens, chaplains, and doctors in our state prisons are up against a problem with which the world at large has failed." Characteristically, however, her address was a revelation of the human side of prison life. "We have a right," she said, "to punish by the law the man who breaks the law, but we have no right to crush his spirit, to break his body, or to embitter his soul by cruelty, partiality, injustice, or ignorant carelessness."

One of the most striking addresses made to the Association in recent years was that of Dr. Waller H. Dade, Chief of the Bureau of Prisoners of the Philippine Islands, with a series of stereopticon views to lend conclusiveness to his assertions. Dr. Dade described the prison system of the Islands, which cares for a population of 8,000, showing that it embodies nearly all the advanced principles of penal administration. For example, he asserted that the government there will assist the ex-prisoner to re-establish himself by furnishing him land and loaning him funds to purchase equipment.

The members of the Association listened to a profound address by Hon. William Renwick Riddell, Justice of the Court of Appeal for Ontario, on *Criminal Prosecution*. Mr. John Koren of Boston, Commissioner for the United States on the International Prison Commission, made a strong appeal for the establishment of a bureau for permanent scientific advancement in prison work. He said, however, that the impulse must come from a practical body like the American Prison Association. The bureau would need to be sufficiently endowed and directly enough connected with other organizations and with practical prison administration so that its work would be worth while. His address was followed by the passage of a resolution intro-

duced by the committee on statistics whereby the new president was empowered to appoint a committee to find a way by which a permanent voluntary bureau to standardize criminal statistics might be established and financed.

The committee on prevention, whose report was given by Mr. C. C. Carstens of Boston, advocated organization of communities on behalf of the welfare of neglected and delinquent children. The community should provide against neglect of the child physically, should afford suitable medical and surgical care, should protect children against sex immorality and against falling into habits of gambling, vagrancy, the use of drugs, and similar evil ways. The community should insist upon family support, should provide suitable maintenance for illegitimate children, should care properly for the defective, and should protect all children from physical cruelty. The address of President C. E. Benson of the Prison Chaplains' Association was notable for its insistence upon the importance of the chaplain in the work of a penal institution. Mr. Benson said: "His mission is to create a moral and religious atmosphere that will permeate and give tone to the whole institution." The occasion of greatest general discussion at the meeting was perhaps the session of the committee on discharged prisoners under the chairmanship of F. Emory Lyon of Chicago. Among other difficulties reviewed, in the restoration of discharged prisoners were lack of business—or trade—training, the shifting of men from one occupation to another without specialization, and lack of sufficient and proper employment in prisons to keep the convict physically in trim.

The next meeting of the American Prison Association will be held at New Orleans in the fall of 1917. The new official organization includes the following: President, Dr. D. C. Peyton, superintendent, State Reformatory, Jeffersonville, Ind.; Vice Presidents, J. B. Wood, Richmond, Va.; Frank Moore, Rahway, N. J.; Mrs. Jessie D. Hodder, Framingham, Mass.; M. Z. White, Moundsville, W. Va.; Gen. Demetrio Castillo, Havana Cuba; C. L. Ditson, Sioux City, S. Dak.; David H. Tribou, Bucksport, Me.; General Secretary, Joseph P. Byers, Philadelphia, Pa.; and committee chairmen as follows: Criminal Law reform, E. D. Duffield, Newark, N. J.; Prevention, Calvin Derrick, Sing Sing, N. Y.; Probation and Parole, J. O. Davidson, Madison, Wis.; Prison Discipline, R. D. Creighton, Kingston, Ont.; Penal Farms, G. C. Erskine, W. Rutland, Mass.