

Law Commission Must Gather Own Facts

Sociology

Both cause and cure of crime are the concern of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement. Some members of the Commission are charged with finding whence crime arises, the other portion is primarily concerned in treatment of the malady after it infects the individual.

Unlike a commission sitting upon the state of a treasury, this Commission cannot call upon any Government Bureau and receive sufficient accurate figures and facts upon which to proceed. If the dollars in the treasury and banks of America were studied, if the cases of smallpox were being considered, then the commission would have available to it Treasury or U. S. Public Health Service reports not older than yesterday or last week.

But as it is, this Commission must also act in the capacity of a fact-gathering agency if it is to have up-to-date and reliable data on which to base its decisions.

The Census Bureau, for example, gathers certain statistics in regard to the sex, age, race, birthplace, and offense of the prisoners in Federal and state prisons and reformatories and in jails and workhouses. Yet the latest available published report of the Census Bureau on this subject contains figures for January 1, 1923. A later report is now in page proof, and will be available in the course of a few months, but this report contains statistics which were true in 1926—three years ago. And three years in the history of crime is sufficient to change the whole aspect of the problem. Other statistics are in many cases even less helpful.

Many theories, advanced by the country's best criminologists—some within the past few months—as to both the cause and the possible cures for crime, will have to be digested by the Commission.

Dr. Harry H. Laughlin, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, has told the Committee on Immigration of the House of Representatives that

we are importing a large portion of our criminal class. Theoretically, our rules for the exclusion of undesirable aliens should keep out all or practically all the criminals who wish to enter the country. Dr. Laughlin, however, found that this has not been accomplished. We have almost as many foreign-born criminals as native-born, in proportion to the total number in the country. And the surprising part about it is that many of these foreign immigrants who become dependents in our prisons cannot be deported because they have become naturalized. It may seem strange that a judge would grant citizenship to anyone who had been convicted of a violation of our laws, but the reason given in such cases is that the violation of certain laws, such as the prohibition law which does not exist in the immigrant's homeland, is not necessarily an indication of moral turpitude.

Other interesting theories recently expounded to account for the prevalence of crime are that in many criminals the emotions are disordered, or that the ductless glands are not functioning properly. The former theory has been advanced by Dr. L. Grimberg as a result of a clinical study of five hundred delinquents, or criminals in the making, and by Dr. William J. Hickson, director of the Psychopathic Laboratory, Chicago Municipal Court, after a twelve-year

study during the course of which over 40,000 criminals were examined.

That the mal-functioning of the ductless glands accounts, at least in large part, for the development of criminals, is the theory of Dr. Max G. Schlapp, director of the New York Children's Court Clinic, who has also had considerable experience in the physical examining of juvenile delinquents.

The migration of our population from the country to the city, increased leisure, the new ease of getting away from the scene of a crime afforded by the automobile, the widespread disregard of law and disrespect of law which has become evident since the enactment of the strict prohibition laws—these are a few of the multitudinous factors that must be given consideration by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement.

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Corona Photographed

Astronomy

The latest view of the corona, million mile deep outer layer of the sun, is shown on our cover this week. This picture is one of the first to reach the United States from the scientific parties observing the eclipse on May 9. It was made by Dr. R. L. Waterfield, who, with Dr. W. E. B. Lloyd, of Cambridge University, set up a temporary eclipse observatory at Iloilo, near the party from the U. S. Naval Observatory.

In the center of the picture is the dark disc of the moon, covering the inner part of the sun, the glare of which ordinarily prevents a view of the faint corona. Since modern eclipse observations have been made, the corona has been seen for a total time of less than an hour, so that its exact nature is still largely a matter of speculation. But it is known to be of very low density, and probably contains some solid particles which reflect the sun's light. Its total brightness is about half that of the full moon.

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