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PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS

WHAT MAKES CRIME?

BY WINTHROP D. LANE

TEST YOURSELF	Yes	No
Recent years have seen a great increase in crime.	.....	.....
Foreigners are responsible for most of this crime.	.....	.....
Crime can be stopped by adequate punishment.	.....	.....

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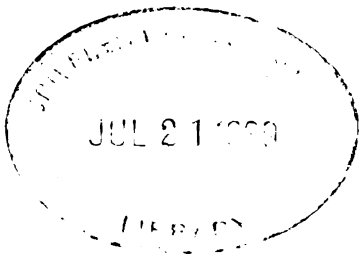
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WHAT MAKES CRIME?

By WINTHROP D. LANE

WHY is there so much interest in crime? Why do so many people read stories about criminals in the newspapers and show their interest in other ways? Is it simply because crime is serious and we all agree that criminals ought to be caught and crime stopped?

That hardly explains the amount of newspaper space given to criminals or the way the stories are written. They are written as if they were interesting for their own sake—as if the editors knew that people wanted to read details of crimes, how criminals commit their acts, what happens to them and what happens to their victims.

Is it because we are fascinated by what we dislike? Is it because criminals get a lot of attention and even become public characters sometimes—and we all like attention?

Or is the reason that we really become interested in the way criminals plan their crimes and carry them out? Are we interested in the ingenuity shown by the criminal? Do we identify ourselves with him step by step, wondering whether we would have done as he did or better?

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These are some of the reasons given for the interest of many people in crime. Another is that we all at times feel a personal dislike of the restraints of society and law, and perhaps unconsciously think of the criminal as rebelling against those restraints and so expressing our own feelings. Certainly there is much of the rebel and outlaw in many criminals.

A Crime Every Twenty-two Seconds

There are very different reasons, of course, for being interested in crime and criminals. One is that crime is really a threat to our security. Every twenty-two seconds, on the average, a robbery, burglary, assault or other criminal act is reported to the police in the United States. Children are continuously rebelling against the law and growing into adult criminals. This affects their families as well as themselves. The amount of unhappiness caused by crime, both to the criminal and others, is large. So is the cost to all of us. These are some of the reasons for being interested in crime.

What produces crime? What kind of people are criminals? How much does crime cost? Is crime increasing or decreasing? What happens to criminals after they have been found guilty? Are there ways to reduce or prevent crime? These are some of the questions discussed in the following pages.

THE MAKING OF THE CRIMINAL

LET'S BEGIN with the making of the criminal. We'll take a real criminal, one that has been in prison four times. His name is Arthur Bennett.* He was born in a large Middle Western city and was a normal child. His father, hardworking and decent, earned $26 a week in the railroad shops; the mother kept house and cared for the children and her husband. Arthur was the fourth of five children. Since the family was not very well off and each child, as it came, added to the expense, the family had moved just after Arthur's birth to a neighborhood where rents were lower. This meant cheaper

* The name and other identifying circumstances are disguised.

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living conditions, and Arthur's father and mother didn't like to have to move but could see no way out of it.

Nothing much happened in Arthur's childhood until he was four years old. Then his mother died. That changed things in many ways for the family. Mary, the oldest, but only twelve, took over the mother's duties and did much of the housework. The father was grief-stricken at the death of his wife and, always a somewhat silent man, tried to help around the house but wasn't very good at it. He stayed at his job, but grew more and more worried as he saw that his wages didn't go as far as when his wife had planned their spending. The neighbors were sympathetic and helpful, but it was a poor neighborhood and there wasn't very much they could do.

Arthur Enters School—

Arthur was put into school when he was six years old. He did well enough for three grades and the first half of the fourth; then he began to get tired of school. His marks went down and both his father and Mary scolded him. They said it would be a disgrace to the family if he didn't pass. Arthur didn't know what a disgrace was, but he looked around at some of the boys who had flunked in the fifth and sixth grades and decided it couldn't be very bad, after all.

When the teachers started to nag him, though, that was too much. They said things he didn't like in front of the other children, and called attention not only to his marks but to the fact that he didn't pay attention. How could he pay attention when things didn't interest him? Who cared anything about the stuff in that speller and the geography? He got warm when the teachers said those things and wanted to get even with them. The only way he could get even was to talk back. He said things that made the other children snicker. That was a new sensation, and he rather liked it.

He began to spend more time on the street. He and other kids found exciting things to do. They collected junk and sold it for money to go to the movies; sometimes Arthur didn't know where the junk came from, but he would help get rid of it anyway.

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—And Becomes a Truant

Arthur was playing truant now also. He was ten years old. Sometimes he would go to school and "forget" to come back at recess. Once in a while he simply wouldn't go at all.

He was drifting farther and farther away from his father and brothers and sisters in spirit. They didn't know what to do about it. One of his older brothers was in the seventh grade and liked school and the other, having finished the eighth grade at fifteen, was a Western Union messenger boy. Arthur envied this brother his freedom to ride all about the city. He disliked the other brother because people were always comparing him with Arthur, and Arthur got the worst of the comparisons. Toward his father he had no particular feeling. The father was not very severe in his punishments but had no knack of being friendly or understanding with his children. Mary, now eighteen, was so grown-up that she was mother so far as Arthur was concerned, but he didn't like her nagging. For Sally, the baby sister, he had a real affection but she was three years younger and not much fun.

When Arthur had to repeat the first half of the fifth grade, his father and Mary scolded him for days, but he paid little attention. A few months later he and a friend found a new game. They went downtown to the five-and-ten-cent stores and stole toys; one watched while the other swiped stuff and hid it under his coat or put it into his pocket. Afterward Arthur would take his share of the toys to school and show them off. A kid would say, "Gee! Where'd you get that? Wish I had it!" Arthur would say, "Want it?" The kid would say, "Sure," and Arthur would give it to him. This made new friends and brought more attention. Arthur was making up for his inability in school.

Arthur was hearing conversations among boys, some of whom were older, about "jobs," "soft rackets," and "rods." He learned that all of these things were concerned with ways of making easy money; a "rod" was a gun. Some of the fellows who talked this way worked and some didn't. One evening a couple of his friends stopped at his house after supper and asked him to go out with them. When they were away from the house one of the friends said: "Want some cigarettes and

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money?" Arthur said he did. They told him all he had to do was to stand on a corner and keep watch while they got through the back window of a store. He was a little scared but did it. When they came out they gave him a package of cigarettes, some candy and sixty-five cents. He felt pretty good; no one ever seemed to know anything about it.

Arthur was becoming vaguely aware of an attitude among many people in the neighborhood that cops were enemies. He heard that railroads and similar concerns were foreign agencies, that the property of such agencies, including the merchandise they carried, was anybody's property, and that successful stealing was looked upon with approval by some grown-ups as well as youngsters.

The First Arrest

A few weeks after he had helped break into the store the same friends passed him in an old Ford. They asked him if he wanted to get some junk with them; they knew a place where there was some good stuff. The car ran out of gas on the way, and all were about to leave it when a man came along and said, "Out of gas?" They said, "Yes." He said he would help them get some. They waited a minute and the man reappeared with a cop. He was a plain-clothes man and the friends had stolen the car. The three were taken to the police station.

Arthur's father was on hand when the case came before the juvenile court but could find few words to say to the judge. Arthur tried to tell his story but the judge decided he needed a lesson and put him on probation. He reported regularly to the probation office for a while—and there met other fellows who were on probation. Some of these were from other parts of town and he learned new things.

Arthur was now a person of more prominence than ever in his own neighborhood. He had been "before the judge" and was a "bad boy." Some parents tried to keep their children from knowing him; he realized this and thought they were silly but didn't like it. The teachers now showed their dislike more openly than ever. His own family made him feel as if he didn't want to be at home. He was beginning to get an idea that lots of people were against him. But some new boys sought his

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acquaintance—and he liked that. Friends asked him what it was like at the police station and in front of the judge, and he made a better story every time he told it. Also, he noticed that some of the girls looked at him differently from before; he didn't know just what their looks meant but he knew that some of the looks were friendly.

The "Big Shot"

There was one fellow in the neighborhood who was several years older than Arthur and whom Arthur particularly liked. He didn't go to school and seemed to know a lot. Arthur understood that he had been to the state institution for delinquents and that there was a write-up with his picture in the papers; the fellows called him a "big shot." One day this fellow asked him if he wanted to go to Logan for "some fun." Arthur was flattered; he said yes. That night the fellow picked him up and they drove to Logan, twenty miles away. There they met two other fellows, waiting for them. It was explained to him that the "fun" was to break into a mill on the outskirts of town; the fellows had it all worked out and all Arthur had to do was to stand in a certain shadow and give the alarm if he heard anyone coming. He agreed to do this but became so curious that he left his post and sneaked up to the window through which the others had disappeared. He heard nothing until a strong arm was around him and a voice said: "Hold the kid while we go in." Presently two cops came out with all three of his companions handcuffed. Arthur had to stand some mighty dirty looks on the way to the police station.

The Reform School

He could make no defense and the fact that he was on probation was against him. At the age of fourteen, therefore, Arthur was committed to the state institution for juvenile delinquents. He remained there fifteen months and saw and heard plenty. His comment was: "They ain't interested in the boys. They say they teach you sumpin' but I never learned nuthin'. I'll say I learned a lot from the other fellows, though."

The institution to which Arthur was sent was poorly managed. There he saw so much severity and neglect that

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again he came to the conclusion that everybody was against him and boys like him. There was very little in the program of the institution to help change Arthur for the better. Throughout this period of his life Arthur was having experiences calculated to make him feel that he was different from other boys and worse than most of them. School, the police, court, probation, a state institution for juvenile delinquents: all of these were building within him a peculiar picture of himself, a picture that his hand was against other people and other people's hands were against him. This feeling was to become very strong in the future.

While in the institution he decided that he would not go home when released. He heard things that made him want to travel, go places. So he and another "inmate," as the boys at the institution were called, agreed to start together for St. Louis and maybe go on to Texas.

By hitchhiking and freight trains they got to Kansas City. There they ran out of money. Remembering some of the things he had learned in the institution, Arthur suggested that they go to the outskirts of town and hold some one up. This they did, getting away safely with $33. Arthur's companion remembered that they were going to Texas and thought they ought to have a gun; so in the next town, with some of the proceeds of the robbery, they went to a pawn shop and bought a cheap revolver. Their ideas now became more ambitious; they held up a gasoline station and robbed the lone attendant of $42.

After four successful robberies the escapade came to grief. On the fifth attempt plans went wrong, and they found themselves locked up in a police station. Possession of the gun was serious and the judge, unable to get them to talk about themselves, decided they were over sixteen and sentenced them to the state reformatory for not less than one year or more than three years.

The story of the making of a criminal out of Arthur Bennett might end here. He broke the rules of the reformatory a few times and so was held longer than the minimum of one year, being released at the end of eighteen months. Throughout that time he associated daily with older and more experienced offenders than himself, since the reformatory received

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men up to thirty years of age. Thus he passed from an elementary education in crime through a secondary one. It would have taken an unusual program within the institution to have rooted out of him all of the habits of behavior and thinking that had become so strong.

Home called loudly to him when he was released. For three years he had not been home, from the age of fourteen and a half to seventeen and a half. He wondered about his father and Mary, but most of all it was the face of the younger sister, Sally, that kept rising in his mind; her three letters to him while he was in the reformatory were still in his pocket. He wanted to see her and decided to go home. Upon arrival he found that the family had moved to another neighborhood because of the disgrace of the word that had come back about his sentence; this relieved him somewhat, since no one in the new neighborhood knew where he had been. Sally and the oldest brother were kind to him and tried to make him feel welcome, but his father, Mary, and the other brother didn't know what to do. They were weary with the struggle of their emotions and heartsick over Arthur's behavior. He decided to go to work and got a job paying him $7 a week; he stuck at it for nearly three months and then, mad one morning at something the boss said to him, quit. For a while he couldn't get another job. While loafing and trying, he met a fellow whom he had known at the state institution for juvenile delinquents. They decided to see what it was like in Cleveland and started. Arthur left a note for Sally.

A Hardened Criminal

In Cleveland Arthur made the acquaintance of three fellows who, he believed, were planning burglaries. By his conversation he let them know his own familiarity with that business. The result was that they treated him as a friend and presently he was planning burglaries with them. After three successful efforts they all decided to go East and try their hands in Philadelphia. There for four years Arthur was one of the gang, which specialized in burglaries and robberies and extended its operations to New York City and Baltimore. At times he had plenty of money and spent it freely. He was

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arrested twice but won his freedom both times through lack of evidence. At last he was convicted and sentenced to from three to six years in the state prison. He now went under four aliases and was well known to the police. After eight months of liberty he was convicted again and serving a second sentence in the state prison. By this time, of course, he had lost all touch with his family and his life in his home town. At the age of twenty-eight he showed all the signs of being a confirmed criminal.

CAUSES WITHIN THE PERSON

NOT a pleasant story, is it? Many of the details could be changed and it still would be a true story of the making of a criminal. Arthur's father could have remarried and an unsympathetic stepmother, bringing children of her own into the family, could have shown such favoritism that the younger Bennett children would have suffered. Arthur could have been brought up by grandparents or an aunt and uncle, or as an orphan placed in an institution for children for whom there is no other support. His mother could have been forced to add to the family income by working away from home and so have been unable to give care to her children.

Other differences could exist in the story. The father could have been cruel to him and made him dislike if not hate him at an early age. The parents might have been too strict with their children about going to Sunday school or church, in wearing clothes, in making friendships with children of the other sex—and so have produced rebellion and resentment when they only meant to bring them up right. The parents might have been born in another country and unable to understand many of the wishes of their children to be as American children; so that conflict and opposition arose in the household. It would have been even worse, of course, if one of the parents or an older brother or sister had been criminal and influenced a younger child.

More subtle forces could have been at work. Arthur could have been the victim of any one of a number of states of mind that sometimes make a boy "bad." His difficulties at school are an example of these; he could not make good in the eyes of

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his teachers, his family or the other children in one of the ways in which children are generally supposed to be able to make good, and so he found other ways of attracting attention. He discovered that impudence and unruly conduct brought him attention, and he gave children toys that he had stolen in order to make himself popular with them. By these means he was becoming somebody; he was making up for his failure in school. Of course, there are better ways to make up for poor school work, such as ability in some game or form of athletics, or in developing some manual or mechanical skill that would have led to his earning a living at a trade, but there was no one on hand to help him when he needed help most.

Other things might have upset him and had the same bad effect. For example, he might have had some physical defect such as poor eyes that kept him out of games; if so, he probably would have wanted to draw attention in some other way. He might have been different in some way that brought him the taunts of other children; or he might just have felt that the other children didn't like to be seen with him. All of these things can produce the feeling, especially in a child, that one is inferior to others or disliked by them or different from them. Such a feeling may produce strange conduct unless there is an understanding adult on hand to help the child adjust himself to this particular difficulty.

CAUSES OUTSIDE THE PERSON

THERE are, of course, conditions of a wider sweep that make for crime. Crime, like all behavior, is the response of a person to his surroundings, and conditions outside the offender which contribute to his criminality are, therefore, just as important as the personality of the offender.

"Bad" Neighborhoods

Probably everyone has noticed that more "tough" boys seem to come from certain parts of cities than from other parts; this has often been proved so far as known delinquents are concerned. You can take a large map of a city and make a dot or stick a pin at the street address of every person who has

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appeared before juvenile court, or been found guilty of misconduct, and the dots or pins will cluster in some sections of the city and be comparatively few in other sections. What are the characteristics of the sections in which the dots cluster?

Studies have been made in a number of cities and have come to similar conclusions. Generally speaking, the areas of greatest delinquency are what have come to be known as the slum areas of these cities. Usually they are the parts of the city near the business center or the centers of heavy industry; they are the areas of poorest housing, run-down appearance, where the families of low income live. Such sections have been a common product of the growth of American cities. As commerce and industry grow and invade new parts of the city, residential areas near by become less desirable and families gradually move away. The vacated dwellings are not kept up. Rents in these areas fall to a point that attracts the families of the lowest incomes. Often the population changes more rapidly than in other parts of the city. A result of all this is that neighborhood standards, social organization, opportunities for play and other constructive influences are weaker than elsewhere.

Arthur lived in a neighborhood not unlike these. Delinquency and crime were common and not looked upon as queer. In the absence of better facilities for play, as we have seen, he and his friends organized gangs. The standards and activities of these gangs were lawless. Yet they afforded about the only means by which these children could satisfy their normal desires for fun, adventure, companionship, thrills and recognition. In neighborhoods where the life of children is differently organized and controlled, as in most neighborhoods, the same desires are satisfied but by different and more normal means.

It must be remembered, of course, that the people who live in these slum areas are a special group. They have been drawn into such parts of the city by conditions existing there, and the lack of such conditions elsewhere. One of the conditions unquestionably is low rent, but another may be the very freedom and lawlessness that exist. Criminality means violating the social order as defined by law, and these people in a sense have the least interest in maintaining the property

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arrangements of society as it is. They are perhaps the ones who are most inclined to regard many of its rules as a pressure. It is a question, therefore, whether more importance should be attached to the influence of the physical characteristics of the neighborhood upon the people, or to the interest of the people in the kind of community life they have.

It must also be remembered that there are plenty of criminals who do not live in such areas and that by no means all of the people in these areas are criminal. For this reason the word "cause" must be used with great caution in speaking of crime. A cause, as we usually regard it, works relentlessly and produces its effect unless stopped by some other influence or agent. Even in the slums there is obviously a process which makes criminals out of some and not out of others. The best way in which to see the making of a criminal is to see the interplay between him and his surroundings, thus tracing the development of his behavior into a criminal way of life.

Broken Homes

Many attempts have been made to study the relation between crime and such factors as broken homes, birth in foreign countries, city life as compared with country life, and so forth. Many of these studies are unsatisfactory because they give no comparison between the criminal and the noncriminal part of the population. Others deal only with offenders sent to institutions, who are of course a special group. A careful study made in Chicago showed that 36 per cent of children in a group of public schools came from broken homes, while 43 per cent of the children appearing in juvenile court came from broken homes, not a large difference. A greater percentage of children sent to institutions for delinquents come from broken homes, but this is partly because judges are likely to send to institutions the children who do not have satisfactory homes. The broken home is only one kind of unsatisfactory home situation, there being undesirable family relationships and influences in many other homes. All studies of delinquents show a very high percentage of children coming from homes in which the atmosphere is unsatisfactory in one way or another.

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Crime and the Foreign Born

Many people think that people born in other countries commit more crimes in this country than are committed by native Americans. That is not true, as has been shown over and over again. One reason why some people still think this, is that they believe they notice so many foreign-looking names of criminals in the newspapers. A name, however, may be an alias and this kind of evidence is unsound. One of Chicago's best known gangsters a few years ago was known by a name that was obviously Irish, but he was born in Minnesota and his parents were of French-Canadian stock. The reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that for every 100,000 foreign-born whites in the total population 209 were arrested and fingerprinted in 1938. The corresponding figure for native whites was 571. In other words, 2.7 times as many native whites were arrested and fingerprinted as foreign-born whites in proportion to the total numbers of both. The foreign born approach the record of the native born most closely in crimes involving personal violence as contrasted with crimes against property.

Native Children of Foreign Born

The situation is somewhat different for the second generation of immigrants, or children born in this country of parents who were born in other countries. They contribute considerably to the crime and delinquency of the United States. For example, nearly two-fifths of the boys appearing before a group of juvenile courts reporting to the United States Children's Bureau had one or both parents foreign born. The exact meaning of this figure cannot be clear until allowance has been made for the proportionate number of such children in the areas served by the courts, but it is large enough to raise a question.

The explanation of greater tendency to crime among the children of foreign-born parents than among the parents themselves is not far to seek. The parents are likely to cling to ideas and habits which they brought with them, while the children, going to American schools and knowing American children, want to dress like Americans, play like Americans

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and be as little different from American children as possible. Sometimes the older people are not in sympathy with this, and conflict and misunderstanding at home arise. If these become serious enough, the rebellion of the child may express itself in delinquent behavior. That is always a possible result of family difficulties. It should also be remembered that large numbers of these second-generation Americans are brought up in the slums which, as we have seen, are literally schools for crime.

Negroes and Crime

A remarkable situation exists with respect to Negroes. Many more Negroes are arrested than their numbers alone would lead one to expect; for every 100,000 Negroes in the population, 1,503 were arrested and fingerprinted in 1938, the corresponding figure for native white people being 571. The percentage of Negroes sent to prison is also high. Of all persons received by state prisons and reformatories in 1936, the latest year for which figures are available, Negroes constituted 27 per cent, although they are only 9.6 per cent of the total population of the United States.

Nor is there any part of the United States in which this situation does not exist. In the New England states, where Negroes constitute 1.1 per cent of the population, they furnish 4.8 per cent of persons sent to state prisons and reformatories in 1936. It is the same in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and other Northern and Western states. In the South Atlantic states, where they are 28 per cent of the population, they furnished 51 per cent of adult committed offenders. Thus, it cannot be said that the South differs in this respect from the North.

Neither can it be charged that Negroes are naturally more likely to be criminals. It must be remembered that a large part of the Negroes live in the slums under the worst kind of economic conditions. Then, too, the law enforcement agencies are manned by white people, with the exception of a few Negro policemen in the Negro sections of Northern cities. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations reported some years ago that testimony submitted to it was "practically

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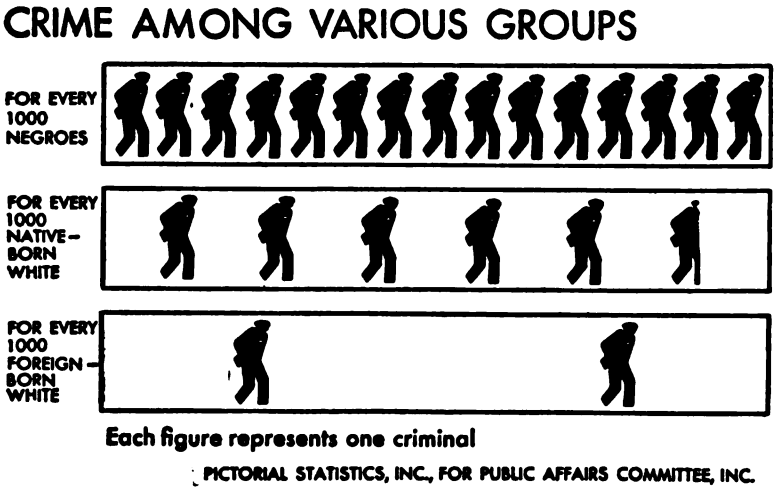
unanimous that Negroes are much more liable to arrest than whites since police officers . . . feel that there is little risk of trouble in arresting Negroes, while greater care must be exercised in arresting whites." Judges are likely to conclude that conditions in Negro homes are unsuitable for children, and so commit a greater percentage of Negro children to institutions than white children. The general prejudice against the



Negroes, coupled with the social and economic discrimination making their lives difficult in other respects, must be held accountable for at least a large part of this high rate of arrest and imprisonment. Not until Negroes have as good economic, educational and other opportunities as white persons can any fair comparison be made between their criminality and that of whites. Some years ago it was shown that none of the 800 graduates of Atlanta University and only one of about 3,500 graduates of Fisk University had been imprisoned. Few universities for whites could make a better showing.

Crime in City and Crime in Country

Is there more crime in the city than in the country? No conclusive statistical answer can be given. Reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, however, show in general that

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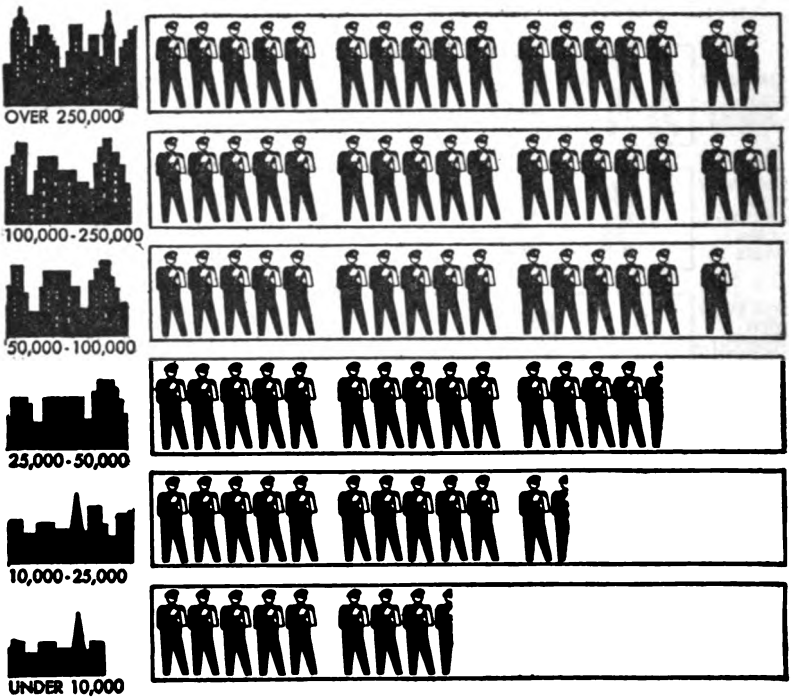
the larger the city, the more crime in proportion to the population. The chart below shows the number of major offenses known to the police, per 1,000 of the population, for cities grouped by size in 1938. It will be seen that the rate of offenses

MORE CRIME IN LARGER CITIES

NUMBER OF MAJOR CRIMES KNOWN TO THE POLICE PER 1000 INHABITANTS



Each policeman represents one crime known to the police

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drops steadily with size except for the somewhat surprising fact that the rate is highest for the second group—those between 100,000 and 250,000 population. Whether this is due to characteristics of these cities, or to the greater accuracy of police reports in cities not of the largest size, it is impossible to say. In general, however, the larger the city, the more crime. The rate

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for the smallest cities is only half that of the largest. We may conclude from this that there is more crime in the city than in the country, and that there is something about life in cities that helps to produce crime. What we have seen about delinquency areas, and the facts presented in the next section, bear this out.

CRIME AND AMERICAN LIFE

MANY students of crime believe that much of the crime in this country is produced by ideas and practices deep seated in American life. Among these are not only vast differences in income, training, race prejudice and discrimination, but conditions and ideas often passed over with little thought in relation to crime. One of these is our fundamental belief in money. As a people, it is contended, we attach too much importance to the getting of money, and we educate our children and young people to do the same. Each generation, as it comes along, learns to believe that money is the surest and most acceptable test of personal accomplishment and success. So strong is this emphasis, declares one writer on crime, that "criminals' as well as bankers' careers may be expected to be profoundly influenced by the desire to succeed in monetary terms." Crimes against property constitute nearly 96 per cent of all major offenses known to the police. Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, has written that American education promotes this desire for money as an ideal and that "the issue is how to obtain it as rapidly as possible and stay out of jail." This emphasis on money influences the behavior of many criminals.

Every Man for Himself

Another condition believed by many persons to be related to crime is the aggressive nature of our general way of living. We have been an intensely individualistic people, from the pushing westward of the frontier to the present competition of our industrial and city life. Every man was free to pursue his own ends and "devil take the hindmost" was almost an ideal. The alternative to an aggressive, highly individualistic method of living is the development of a genuine regard for

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the welfare of society as a whole and a standard of personal responsibility toward community life that will not only control the conduct of individuals, but can be imparted to children and so become a tradition. Such a development has occurred in some of the European countries that are freest from crime and would be desirable in the United States.

More specific practices are believed to be related to crime. One is the low standard of business ethics with which many young people become familiar. An example is fraudulent or near-fraudulent advertising, of which there is a very great deal; and young people are free to conclude either that it makes no difference how many false statements are made in trying to sell goods to the public, or that he is the most successful advertiser who can create the most favorable impression with least regard for the truth. Another practice is the actual dishonesty in business relations, the attempt to get the better of the other fellow in ways that it is thought best to conceal. A third is bribery, not merely the bribery of public officials and legislators, but the bribery that goes on in private business, the bribery that so often accompanies the landing of contracts or the purchase of goods on a large scale. Buyers for department stores, hotels, factories, railways and other large businesses sometimes accept and even demand bribes. Not all young people who know of these things imitate them, of course, but the way in which they are tolerated must be a factor in the education of many. Moreover, the line between some business practices and the crimes commonly prosecuted, such as theft, robbery, and burglary, is very narrow and difficult to see. It is inevitable that some persons will fail to see the difference and will be thoroughly convinced that justice is nonexistent and that people whose position or money protects them may do things of a harmful nature without fear of arrest. There is no doubt whatever that many criminals firmly believe this, and that the growth within them of this cynical point of view has helped to make them confirmed criminals.

Political Corruption

Another condition believed closely related to crime is the low level of much political activity and the alliance between

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crooked politics and crooked business. Many young people in cities see what is going on; they see elections bought or otherwise dishonestly won, and they know that people known to them or their families are participating. Sometimes they are enlisted as aids themselves. They see these things in relation to what they have been told is American democracy's most cherished possession, the ballot, and the high trust of public office. When a prosecutor like Dewey exposes the protection afforded dishonest business and racketeering in New York by persons of political prominence, and when federal prosecutors expose a scandal like that of the Pendergast administration in Kansas City, it is not an exaggeration to say that they are exposing what, in all reality, is a way of life for a number of Americans. Many young people and children are growing into this way of life in American cities today. Their education is taking place in a laboratory of crime.

IS CRIME INCREASING?

FEW PHRASES have become more familiar than "crime wave." Newspapers manufacture a crime wave out of very little; two or three crimes of a similar nature in a locality are usually enough. This is too bad, because there are no such things as crime waves in the sense in which most people use that term. There are increases and decreases in the number of reported crimes, just as there are increases and decreases from year to year in lots of other things, such as marriages, births, deaths, automobile accidents and divorces. In 1931 the number of crimes reported to the police of 73 cities was 378,000. The population of these cities is approximately 21 million, or a sixth of the whole population of the United States, so this is a very large sample. In 1932 the number dropped slightly; it rose in 1933 to 383,000. Thereafter, for three years, it dropped until in 1936 it was 320,000. In 1937 it was 347,000 and in 1938 it again fell to 341,000. This is a drop of 9.9 per cent for the entire period, from 1931 to 1938. These are the published figures of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They not only show no crime wave but an actual reduction in crime.

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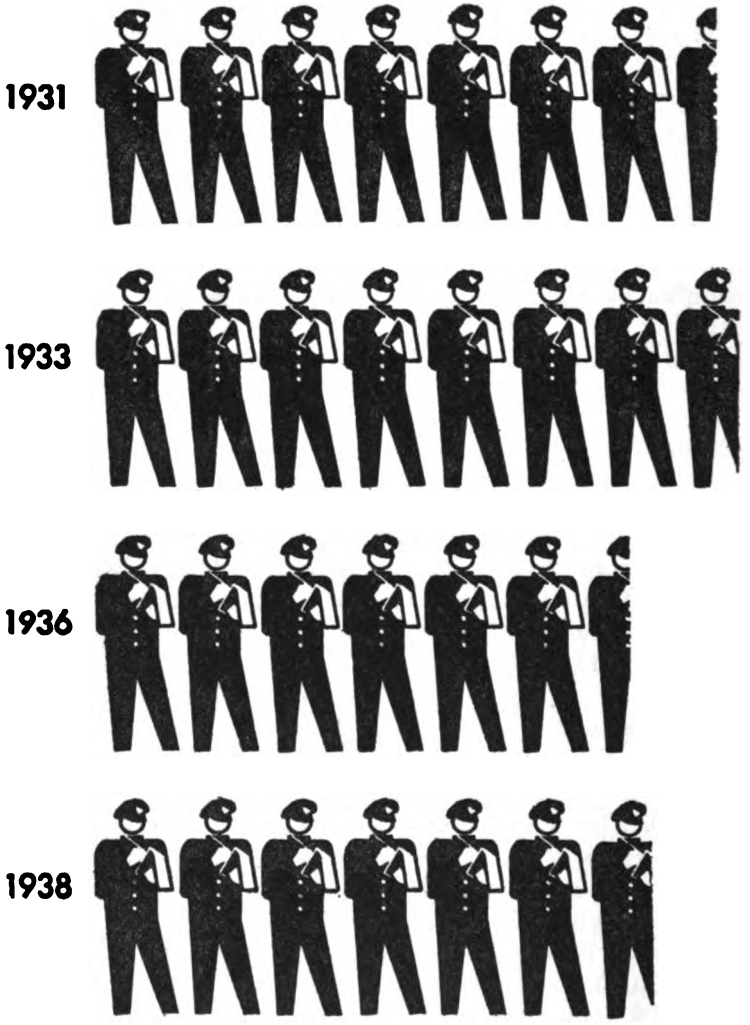
CRIME IS NOT INCREASING

NUMBER OF MAJOR CRIMES (IN 73 CITIES WITH 21 MILLION PEOPLE) KNOWN TO THE POLICE



Each policeman represents 50,000 crimes

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ARE CRIMINALS OLD OR YOUNG?

ARE criminals young? Yes. From 1932 to the middle of 1935, as reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, more persons 19 years of age were arrested and fingerprinted than any other single age year. Since then the age has risen slightly, being 21 in 1938.

Fifty-three per cent of all persons arrested and fingerprinted were less than 30 in 1938. About 36 per cent were less than 25 years of age and 18.8 per cent were under 21.

Persons less than 25 were 35.9 per cent of the total number of persons arrested, and yet such persons constituted 54 per cent of those charged with robbery, 62 per cent of those charged with burglary and 49 per cent of those charged with larceny, or theft. Of persons charged with auto theft, youths under 25 constituted 73 per cent of the total. In interpreting these figures it must be remembered that about one-sixth of our population is between 16 and 24 years of age.

THE COSTS OF CRIME

FEW games are so fascinating as to try to estimate the cost of crime, or the nation's annual crime bill, judging from the number of people who do it. It is impossible, or at least no satisfactory way to do it has so far been found.

What is a cost of crime? Obviously, expenses associated with administering criminal justice. These include such part of police costs as may properly be ascribed to crime activities; expenses of prosecution; trial and court costs; and the maintenance and treatment of convicted offenders, including costs of probation, institutions and supervision on parole. There are private expenditures for maintenance and supervision as well as public.

But this is only a beginning. Many corporations employ large numbers of private watchmen, detectives and police to protect property and to prevent crime. And what about protective devices such as safes, burglar alarm systems, armored cars, bullet-resisting glass, guns and other mechanical devices and protections against crime? To what extent are

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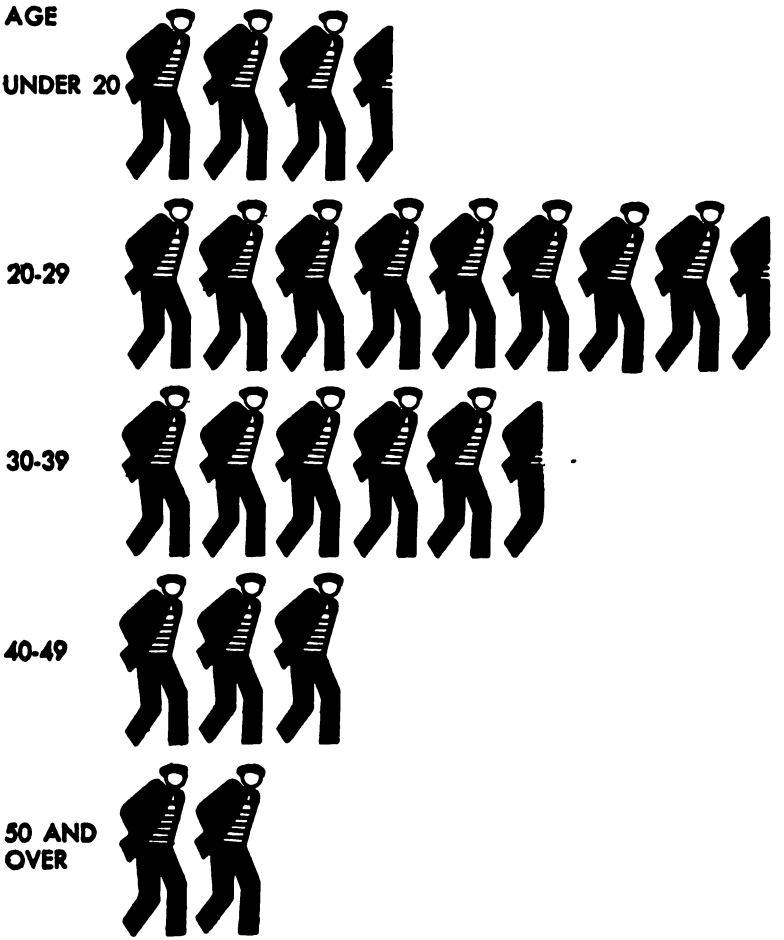
ARE CRIMINALS OLD OR YOUNG?

ARRESTED CRIMINALS (MALE AND FEMALE) IN 1938



Each person represents 25,000 criminals arrested

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safes bought to prevent crime or as protection against fire? How much nonbreakable glass is used to resist bullets and how much to promote safety in accidents?

How are costs to be estimated in crimes against property? Shall we include only the value of property actually destroyed or lost, or the value of property transferred from the owner to the thief or criminal? If I steal $100 from you, is that $100 lost in a sense in which it should be included in a statement of annual crime costs? Or is most criminal appropriation of property, in a basic and social sense, merely a redistribution of property, however undesirable the method involved? As a report of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement asked: "If Robin Hood stole from the rich men of his day and gave his takings to the poor, was the result a social loss or a social gain?" Such questions as these illustrate the difficulties involved in estimating crime costs.

With respect to crimes against the person, shall a money value be placed upon injuries? Can a money value be placed upon the mental and emotional injury resulting from crimes of a sexual nature or those in which the victim is tortured? And how about the lives of persons lost in homicides? Shall a money value be placed upon them?

What about the loss of the productive labor of the host of persons involved in arresting criminals, caring for prisoners and preventing crime?

There are still other items. Considerable money is spent to support the dependents of prisoners. A large amount of crime insurance is written. Finally, what about crime studies and crime articles: this pamphlet, for example, and the cost of crime news in the papers?

Obviously many of these questions are difficult and it is impossible to get some of the information. The most comprehensive study of crime costs made in this country was the study by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, known as the Wickersham Commission. It had the following to say:

"It is wholly impossible to make an accurate estimate of the total economic cost of crime to the United States. Many 'estimates' of total cost have been made, but they, in our

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opinion, have been only guesses; and we do not feel that any useful purpose would be served by still another guess. . . It is a matter of common knowledge that the economic loss due to crime is enormous, that it is desirable that it be reduced, and that it can be reduced by reducing crime and by diverting the man power now devoted to criminal activities into legitimate and productive channels.

"It seems to us, therefore, that the desirability of adequate crime control from an economic standpoint is so obvious that it should not require the reenforcement of specific figures as to aggregate dollars-and-cents losses to rouse the public to the interest and activity necessary to deal adequately with the problem."

TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS

IT IS always easy to start an argument about the way persons convicted of crime ought to be treated. There are still those who believe that the chief treatment should be punishment, and some believe that the more severe the punishment the better. They argue that punishment keeps the offender from committing more crimes and that it deters others from committing any. There is little evidence that this is true. When criminals were branded on the face and hands with hot irons, offenders used to show up in court with so many marks on them that the branding official could hardly find a fresh spot. And when pickpockets were hanged in public as an example, other pickpockets went among the crowds watching the executions and plied their trade within the very sight of the gallows.

The important thing, in the opinion of criminologists today, is the protection of the public. To accomplish this it is necessary that prisoners be more law-abiding when returned to the community than when taken away. About 97 per cent of persons sent to prisons and reformatories today are released at some time or other.

How to make them responsible citizens is the problem of prisons, reformatories, institutions for juvenile delinquents, houses of correction and other institutions for delinquents and lawbreakers. There is not room in this pamphlet for a detailed description of the programs of such institutions.

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Many institutions make very little attempt to reform or improve their prisoners, being content to prevent their escape and to subject them to very severe and repressive discipline. The effect of such treatment in many cases, probably in most, is to make the offender worse than when he came in and to send him out of the institution convinced that everyone is against him and that he has no chance. The effect, thus, is the reverse of the correct aim of institutions.

Unmaking Criminals

In other institutions the program is more intelligent. As soon as the prisoner is received he is examined by a doctor, a psychologist, a psychiatrist and other members of the staff—with the purpose of discovering whether he is well or ill, what kind of person he is, what his needs are and, if possible, what made him a criminal. A program for his life in the institution is then planned. He receives necessary medical care and education if he has not gone far in school, and is assigned to work and living quarters in accordance with his age, ability, and other things. The object is to send him out in as good physical and mental condition as possible; this will increase his chances of making good when released. Since many prisoners have never learned how to use their leisure time, attempts are made to teach them the right kind of recreation. Arthur would have benefited from such instruction in the first institution to which he was sent. Imprisonment itself is sufficient punishment; it is up to the institution, which is the protector and representative of the public, to do all that it can to send prisoners out better than when they came in.

What Is Parole?

In some institutions and states there is also a careful plan for guiding and supervising prisoners after release. The purpose is twofold: (1) to help them get back on their feet and make good, and (2) to return them to the institution, or discipline them in some other way, if they make no effort to succeed or actually commit additional crimes. A program of this sort is called parole and is highly desirable. Most of the criticism of parole is based on the idea that parole is letting an offender

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out too early, showing favoritism toward him, being lenient or merciful with him. That is not the purpose of parole in places where parole is properly administered. The purpose is to continue supervision and control over the offender in the interest of public safety, to make him prove that he can make good before being finally discharged by the state, and to assist him to do so. This is the best method of release. But such a program obviously can succeed only if it is run by experienced and trained people and is free from political control. Unfortunately, there is still much bad administration of parole in the United States. Despite recent criticisms, however—or perhaps to some extent because of them—parole administration has improved in a number of states in the past few years. The constructive attitude that should be taken toward parole by persons interested in reducing crime is to work for its improvement, rather than to misunderstand and attack it.

Use of Probation

Many lawbreakers are placed on probation instead of being sent to institutions. Probation is different from parole. It is a substitute for imprisonment. The convicted offender, while continuing to live in the community, is required to adhere to conditions laid down by the court and be subject to the guidance and supervision of a probation officer. Frequently, the offender would probably be released if no such treatment were possible. It is applied, for the most part, to persons who have been convicted for the first time, whose offenses are of the less serious kind or who, for other reasons, are regarded as hopeful cases.

Properly administered, both probation and parole are social case work. The probation officer ought to be trained and qualified, with special experience in the psychiatric aspects of case work. He is responsible for the guidance, re-education and supervision of offenders placed in his charge. A good probation officer can do a great deal with most first offenders. When persons on probation misbehave, they are usually brought again before the judge, who still has power to send them to an institution.

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Probation, like treatment in institutions, is not administered as well as it ought to be in most parts of the United States. Many probation officers are not trained for their work and many judges use probation carelessly. Supervision degenerates into a routine, and persons on probation report periodically to the desk of an officer who has made no real check on their behavior and no real effort to help them. On the other hand, careful probation service has been developed in some communities. A clearer understanding of probation, by legislatures, the courts, prosecutors, and people in general, would improve its quality.

The third common method of disposing of convicted offenders is fining them or simply making them pay money for their crimes.

CAN CRIME BE PREVENTED?

TO prevent crime it is obviously necessary to do more than merely to treat persons who have already become criminals. Little progress would have been made in the prevention of disease if nothing more had been done than to treat individual after individual as he became sick. Disease has been prevented, or greatly reduced, by purifying water supplies, thus preventing typhoid fever; by purification of milk; by draining mosquito swamps, thus preventing malaria; and by altering people's diets, thus reducing the amount of pellagra. It has been prevented by other means also, such as the use of antitoxin and immunization, reducing diphtheria and smallpox, for example, almost to the vanishing point in some cities. Another attack has been that of detection in the earliest stages, as in the case of tuberculosis. Greater care in following the rules of hygiene has prevented disease also.

Lessons may be drawn from this with respect to the prevention of crime. From what has already been written in this pamphlet about the making of criminals and conditions producing crime, it will appear that efforts to prevent crime must be applied in these directions: (1) elimination of bad social and neighborhood conditions; (2) protection of individuals from developing traits or emotional disturbances that lead to delinquent or criminal conduct; and (3) more intelligent

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treatment of the first stages of delinquency. It will be seen that, though criminality and disease are not the same, these correspond roughly to methods successful in the prevention of disease. Both may be called "prevention at the source."

Getting at the Roots

To eliminate the neighborhood, social, political, business and other conditions already described is obviously a task of gigantic proportions and desirable on many grounds other than the prevention of crime. It would involve cleaning up society itself. Beginnings toward the improvement of some of the bad areas in the cities have been made by recent slum clearance and low-cost housing projects. But it remains to be seen just how successful these will be, and how far this development will go. The ideas, customs and practices of such neighborhoods must be changed as well as the buildings and landscape. And incomes must be sufficient to make it unnecessary for people to live under such conditions, or other conditions productive of crime. The elimination of slum areas is a hopeful part of an effort to prevent or reduce crime.

Some of the changes needed can at best come slowly. Americans are not going to drop their love of money in a hurry. Neither are they going to change overnight from an individualistic society to one in which cooperation and regard for the welfare of others receive due importance. Changes in this direction are noticeable and educators of youth, as well as other molders of public opinion, have recently shown an interest in quickening such changes. But it is a long-time program. So, probably, is the acceptance of higher standards of behavior by many business and political groups. Whatever contributes to these ends is to be regarded as a contribution to the prevention of crime.

Other changes may be more consciously hastened. With a greatly reduced immigration, the assimilation of the foreign born may be quickened by programs of adult education and other means. Schools in areas inhabited by the foreign born may be more alert to the problems of children growing up there. Opportunities and facilities for wholesome recreation, including playgrounds, may be extended, and undesirable

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commercial amusements may be curtailed. The glorification of criminals in many newspapers, actually making heroes of them in the eyes of some youth, is an evil influence and ought to be voluntarily reduced by the newspapers themselves or properly controlled; but this is difficult because of our strong insistence upon the freedom of the press. Some editors have, when requested, agreed to keep out of their papers the names of children arrested or brought before the courts.

Helpful, also, would be the extension of constructive organizations for the education of youth and for their leisure time, such as clubs, camps, athletic leagues and the like. These must reach the young people who need them. Schools should do more in developing such organizations than they have done so far.

School courses should be revised to meet the real needs of many children whose needs are not now being met.† This means the extension of vocational education and of more carefully planned guidance programs. There must be increasing recognition of the school's responsibility for the personality growth and conduct of the child, as well as for education in the traditional sense.

We may come now to the second of the three kinds of effort mentioned above, namely, the protection of individuals from developing personality traits or emotional disorders that lead to delinquent or criminal behavior. Mention should be made perhaps of proposals designed to improve the kind of people who are born, to prevent the reproduction of undesirable and inferior stocks; these are proposals in the field of eugenics. Selective sterilization is one of these. Some persons advocate measures of this kind as a means to reduce crime, but it has not yet been shown that such measures will achieve this end.

Parent Education

A more intelligent understanding of the nature and needs of children is vitally necessary. It is in the home that personalities are largely formed. Why shouldn't young people be pre-

† For details see *Schools for Tomorrow's Citizens*, Public Affairs Pamphlet, No. 30, 1939.

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pared in some measure for parenthood before marriage instead of waiting until they have children and make the mistakes in rearing them which are so clearly seen in institutions for delinquents? The spread of knowledge of mental hygiene is essential if we are to make substantial progress in bringing children through childhood and adolescence. To that end it is important to form child study groups and to educate parents for their difficult responsibilities. Yet no matter how successful such efforts may become, there will always be plenty of parents who will be comparatively incompetent in the rearing of children.

For that reason it is important that behavior difficulties be detected as early as possible so that they may be given skilled treatment. This calls for the development on a wider scale of child guidance clinics; for a clearer recognition by teachers of the first symptoms of emotional disturbance and maladjustment; for more skill and understanding by judges, probation officers and others connected with processes of law enforcement; and for more intelligent treatment and re-education by institutions first receiving youthful offenders. Only in such ways can the errors being committed today be avoided in the future.

There is plenty to work at here for city, state, and nation, for both communities and individuals. Meanwhile, it would be unwise to think that crime can be easily prevented.

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