

REPORT
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON CRIME
OF THE
CITY OF CHICAGO



ALDERMAN CHARLES E. MERRIAM, *Chairman*

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ALD. THOMAS D. NASH

ALD. OTTO KERNER, Secretary

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Introduction and Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Council Committee on Crime was created by resolution of the City Council, introduced by Alderman Charles E. Merriam, May 18, 1914. The resolution was as follows:

"Ordered that the Mayor be and is hereby authorized and directed to appoint a committee of five aldermen for the purpose of investigating and reporting to this Council upon the frequency of murder, assault, burglary, robbery, theft and like crimes in Chicago; upon the official disposition of such cases; upon the causes of the prevalence of such crimes; and upon the best practical methods of preventing these crimes."

In accordance with the terms of the foregoing order the following committee was appointed:

Alderman Merriam,
Alderman Nash,
Alderman Long,
Alderman Walkowiak,
Alderman Kerner.

Alderman Merriam was chosen as Chairman of the Committee and Alderman Kerner was made the Secretary.

Morgan L. Davies was made the Attorney for the Commission, and was assisted in the investigation by Mr. James McKeag. Mr. Fletcher Dobyns acted as Associate Counsel and was in personal charge of the work regarding pickpockets, fences, gambling and police inefficiency. The statistical work of the Commission was conducted by Miss Edith Abbott of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. The criminological side of the inquiry was carried on by Robert H. Gault, Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University and editor of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology. He was assisted in this work by Dr. H. C. Stevens, of the Psychopathic Laboratory of the University of Chicago.

Detailed reports were presented to the Committee by the experts employed and hearings were held at which the subjects discussed in these reports were considered. At the sessions of the Committee extended testimony was given by judges, members of the police force, experts on charitable and correctional work, police work and others.

This report embodies the reports made to the Commission by experts in charge of special investigations, the findings of the Commission, and the recommendations for action, based upon the investigation. The general outline of the report is as follows:

- I. Summary of findings of the Commission.
- II. Summary of the recommendations of the Commission.
- III. Report of Miss Edith Abbott, on criminal statistics.
- IV. Report of Professor Robert H. Gault on the underlying causes of crime, and the practical methods of preventing crime.
- V. Report of Messrs. Davies and Dobyns, giving a description and analysis of criminal conditions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The treatment of crime in Chicago is wholly inadequate in that:

1. Many professional criminals escape the penalties of the law and prey at will upon society.
2. Poor and petty criminals are often punished more heavily than is just.
3. The treatment of those sentenced to penal institutions is pitifully ineffective.
4. Practical methods of preventing crime are not applied as extensively as experience warrants and demands.

The technique of man-hunting, the process of prosecuting, the care of the "caged man," and the means of preventing the creation of criminals are far below standards already in practical operation elsewhere.

I.

1. The police and criminal judicial statistics in Chicago are wholly incomplete and are not even assembled or published by any authority.

2. The list of "criminal complaints," complaints of crimes to the police, has not been open to the public, but regarded as a private police affair. (Publicity has recently been given to certain of these complaints as a result of the work of this Committee.)

3. The amount of crime in Chicago is rapidly increasing. Total number of arrests:

1905.....	82,472
1909.....	70,375
1913.....	109,764

The total number of criminal complaints (felonies) in

1905.....	11,732
1909.....	10,697
1913.....	14,340

Arrests or arraignments for murder, burglary and robbery:

	Murder	Robbery	Burglary
Chicago, 1913	262	1,022	1,041
New York, 1913	131	928	1,755
London, 1913	36	78	1,129

4. There were in 1913, 14,340 criminal complaints, as follows: (From police classification.)

Robbery.....	1,389
Larceny.....	5,375
Burglary.....	6,534
Other.....	1,042

5. Fifty-seven and seven-tenths per cent of the men arrested and 61.5% of all women arrested are under thirty years of age.

6. Of those arrested 64.7% are native Americans, and 35.3 % foreign born, the relative percentage of population being 53.2% and 46.8%. (Population over 15 years of age taken as basis.)

7. Thousands of innocent persons are annually imprisoned in the County Jail, many of them under disgraceful conditions, tending to create criminals.

8. The present machinery catches poor, petty and occasional criminals, and punishes them severely, but fails signally to suppress the professional criminal.

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9. There were in 1913, 109,764 arrests and 58,532 persons discharged, on first hearing. Of 121,333 cases disposed of in the Municipal Court, 57.5% were discharged.

10. Of 7,342 felony "cases," in 1913, there were 932 convictions, 773 given a term, of which 208 were penitentiary or reformatory sentences.

11. Of the 14,709 persons sentenced to the House of Correction, 5,214 or 35.4% admitted having served a previous term, 1,545 or 10.5% five terms, 453 or 3.1% ten terms, 18 fifty terms, six 101 terms or over, and one 301 terms.

12. Nine-tenths of those arrested in Chicago are men.

13. Over 80% of those committed to the Bridewell are sent for non-payment of fines. Thirty-five per cent are sent for the non-payment of fines of less than \$15, and 19% for fines of \$15 to \$20—a total of 56% for fines of less than \$20.

II.

1. There are in Chicago a large number of "hang-outs" which are the meeting places of well-known professional criminals. The Committee found 100 of these, most of which were saloons and pool rooms, without exhausting the list of them. In a number of instances these hang-outs are conducted by men with criminal records.

2. There were in Chicago at the time of the investigation a large number of professional criminals, of whom the Committee has located about five hundred. This list includes pickpockets, burglars, holdup men, confidence men, gamblers, pimps, safe-blowers, shoplifters, and all around crooks. Most of the burglary, robbery and larceny is committed by them.

3. Professional criminals have built up a system which may be called a "crime trust," with roots running through the police force, the bar, the bondsmen, the prosecutor's office, and political officials.

4. We find the business of theft in Chicago highly organized. There is a large number of "fences" where stolen goods may be readily sold. Of these, the Committee has located thirty-nine. The burglars' trust has its wholesalers, its jobbers, and its retailers, its interurban and interstate branches. Six thousand five hundred and thirty-four burglaries were reported for 1913, and five thousand three hundred and seventy-five cases of larceny. The value of property stolen reaches millions of dollars. The greater part of the stealing in Chicago is done by organized thieves.

5. We find collusion between members of the detective force and professional criminals. Graft, favoritism, and political influence tend strongly toward a demoralization of the police force, and particularly the detective branch of the service.

6. We find a close connection between alcoholism, "dope," prostitution, gambling, and crime.

7. Certain professional bondsmen not only supply a bond, but serve as general "fixers."

8. There is a group of criminal lawyers whose work includes dealing with the police, furnishing professional alibis and professional witnesses, jury fixing, spiriting away of witnesses, exhaustive continuances, and all the underground activity of all around "fixers".

9. Appointments in the office of City Prosecutor and State's Attorney are made on a political basis; hence the permanent employment of expert prosecutors is made impossible.

III.

Police organization and methods are wholly inadequate to deal with the crime situation in Chicago, assuming the integrity of all members of the force. Incompetence, lack of discipline, and aggressiveness are noticeable on a large scale. These may be summed up under the following heads:

- a. Lack of adequate publicity regarding police statistics.
 - b. Lack of follow-up system for criminal complaints.
 - c. Lack of effective supervision of patrolmen.
 - d. Lack of effective direction of detective work.
 - e. Lack of discipline and aggressiveness.
1. Failure of patrolmen to cover night beats seriously cripples the protection of persons and property.
 2. Detective sergeants are not required to make adequate and detailed reports of their work.
 3. The first need of the force is the more effective use of those now available rather than an increase of the force.
 4. Sanitary conditions in many of the police stations are intolerable.
 5. No adequate provision is made for the defense of poor persons, charged with crime, and as a result, serious injustice is often done.
 6. No provision is made for official interpreters, and consequently, the guilty sometimes escape and the innocent are punished because of ignorance of the language.

IV.

1. Many criminals suffer from serious physical and mental disorders, and require hospital treatment rather than ordinary imprisonment.

2. Examination of Juvenile delinquents at John Worthy School shows many suffer from profound disorders of the nervous system, and cannot be reclaimed under methods now in vogue. 41% of the boys examined were mentally retarded, and many others suffer from grave physical defects.

3. Study of delinquents in Juvenile Court shows that cause of delinquency, in many "normal" cases, was environmental; 47% of this group "making good." Of "subnormal" cases under present methods, relatively few are reclaimed.

4. No adequate provision is made for assistance of boys from St. Charles School. Hence many boys are re-arrested and brought back.

5. St. Charles School, with one thousand boys on parole, one-half from Chicago, has one parole officer to care for them.

6. The Psychopathic Laboratory renders indispensable service in diagnosing cases and indicating treatment of defective delinquents.

7. Many insane persons are committed to and serve sentences in the House of Correction. 132 such cases were discovered between January 1, 1914, and August 20, 1914.

8. Of 126 women examined in the House of Correction there were found: Number.

	Mental Age.	
1.....	between 5 and 6 years	
1.....	between 6 and 7 years	
5.....	between 7 and 8 years	
8.....	between 8 and 9 years	
32.....	between 9 and 10 years	
29.....	between 10 and 11 years	
36.....	between 11 and 12 years	
12.....	between 12 and 13 years	
2.....	between 13 and 14 years	

9. The working of the adult probation law is seriously hindered by the legal limitation of the number of probation officers to 20, who have charge of about 5,000 cases arising annually. The inevitable result is failure to investigate thoroughly and to provide proper supervision for those paroled. With adequate facilities for supervision, the work of this office would be of immense value in preventing first offenders from becoming professional criminals.

10. Of 700 boys sent to the Boys' Court and examined in the Psychopathic Laboratory during the first six weeks, 84% were found mentally deficient. No adequate provision is made for the care of such cases.

11. Adequate facilities for vocational guidance and training would prevent much delinquency, and vocational guidance with employment would reclaim much more.

12. Professional criminals are recruited from the ranks of the delinquent boy, but no adequate means of treatment for such boys is available.

13. The chief causes of crime are:

(a) The defective physical and mental (psychological) condition of the individual, as nervous disorders, infection, psychosis, and feeble-mindedness.

(b) Defective environment: the home, the school, regularity of employment, and poverty.

14. The pressure of economic conditions has an enormous influence in producing certain types of crime. Unsanitary housing and working conditions, unemployment, wages inadequate to maintain a human standard of living, inevitably produce the crushed or distorted bodies and minds from which the army of crime is recruited. The crime problem is not merely a question of police and courts, it leads to the broader problems of public sanitation, education, home care, a living wage, and industrial democracy.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**I.**

1. That the licenses of known criminal "hangouts" be revoked and that they should not be restored either to the same person or the same place.
2. That professional criminals be arrested and convicted under the state vagrancy law in accordance with the plan submitted by this Committee.
3. That the record of all applicants for saloon and pool room licenses in precincts where the crime rate is unusually high be scrutinized with extreme care in order to prevent the issuance of a license to a person with a criminal record. On the petition of six citizens it should be the duty of the Second Deputy Superintendent of Police to make an investigation and report.
4. That lists of criminal complaints, including robbery, burglary and larceny, be reported monthly to the City Council, classified according to the character of the complaint and the police precinct; that the total number of all criminal complaints be likewise reported, and that these facts be published in pamphlet form; and that the disposition of cases be likewise reported monthly and published.
5. That the General Superintendent of Police, the Civil Service Commission and the State's Attorney co-operate in a persistent and systematic effort to eliminate collusion between police officials and criminals.
6. That the Civil Service Commission report to the City Council at once and thereafter annually a list of police officers discharged and reinstated, with the cause of discharge and the reason for reinstatement.
7. That a systematic method be made to locate "fences," in the manner employed by the Committee, or other adequate method.
8. That an efficiency system for police officials be installed to the end that promotions may be made on the basis of definite ascertained merit.
9. That present police methods be thoroughly overhauled and improved types be adopted and installed under expert supervision, with especial attention to records and filing systems, detective work, training and supervision of officers and the best type of patrol system.
10. That crime maps be prepared by the police department showing the various classes of crime by precincts and kept up in such a way that any increase in crime may be immediately indicated and that prompt investigation may be made and action taken.
11. That adequate daily reports of work be made by detective sergeants in the manner outlined before this Committee.
12. That measures be taken to prevent "friendly pulls" by local operators either by providing that patrolmen's pulls be made directly to a central bureau or by other adequate means.
13. That the vice reports made to the General Superintendent by the Second Deputy's office be made public monthly, as a check on the local commanding officers.
14. That police officers be given instruction in the nature and value of evidence, and that evidence be reviewed by the commanding officer before presentation.
15. That captains should make written reports to the chief in all cases where warrants are refused by the court.

16. That the Municipal Court and the Criminal Court investigate the activities of professional bondsmen with special reference to:

1. The number of times any person appears on bonds within a period of six months.
2. The character of the charge and the record of the defendant.
3. The amount of bond already given by the bondsman.
4. The political connections, if any, of the bondsman; and that lists of bondsmen appearing more than once during a six-month period be published every six months.

17. That the Bar Association of Chicago investigate the disreputable practices of certain criminal lawyers and secure their disbarment, if possible.

18. That the State's Attorney endeavor to secure the evidence of and conviction for conspiracy to obstruct the administration of justice on the part of certain attorneys and certain groups of pickpockets and other criminals.

19. That the State's Attorney and the Municipal Court co-operate more closely in dealing with cases held to the Grand Jury after preliminary hearing in the Municipal Court.

20. That a joint commission be appointed by the Chief Justice of the Municipal Court and the presiding judge of the Criminal Court for the purpose of studying the criminal practice and procedure in the courts of Chicago and recommending necessary changes in methods or in law for the better administration of justice; that such an inquiry should include among other things the study of:

1. An improved system of criminal statistics.
2. Actual methods and practices in police courts.
3. Actual methods and practices in Criminal Courts.
4. Methods in office of City Prosecutor and State's Attorney.
5. Necessary changes in criminal law and procedure and drafts of the same.
6. Operation of the parole and probation systems.
7. Creation of a consolidated court of Chicago.
8. Improved methods of electing judges.

21. That the bond issue of \$1,199,000 for the construction of additional police stations be ratified in the interest of the health and well-being of the police force and of those detained in the stations.

22. That the state law be amended to provide that the minor positions in the State's Attorney's office be placed under the merit system.

23. That a central bureau of official interpreters be established for use in stations where there is greatest need for such an agency.

24. That provision be made for a police attorney not active in any political party or faction, and that he should not engage in outside practice.

25. That the general fining system be so modified either by legislation or court rule as to provide for:

1. Payment of fines on the installment plan.
2. Commitment to an appropriate institution in place of fine where where such commitment is necessary.

26. That payment be made out of earnings of prisoners to their families.

27. That the state law be so amended as to change the fining system for prostitutes to a sentence of commitment to an appropriate institution.

II.

1. That a farm colony be established by the city in connection with the work of the House of Correction; and that necessary funds for that purpose be voted.
2. That the facilities of the Psychopathic Laboratory be increased.
3. That a House of Shelter be constructed in connection with the present Bridewell, to be located outside the city; and that necessary funds for that purpose be voted.
4. That the present inadequate County Jail be replaced by an institution corresponding to modern ideas of the humane treatment of criminals.
5. That the office of Public Defender be established in connection with the Criminal Court of Cook County as a means of securing justice to those unable to secure adequate counsel.
6. That a physician be employed permanently at the House of Correction to carry on medical work of the character performed for this Committee by Dr. Stevens.
7. That prisoners who are addicted to the drug habit and now sent to the House of Correction be segregated in farm colonies or treated in hospitals until cured.
8. That an amendment to Chapter 85, Section 32, of the Illinois Revised Statutes (1913) be enacted so that the medical staff at the House of Correction would have the same authority as the state penitentiary physicians now have in regard to committing insane persons to an insane asylum.
9. That a farm colony be established by the state for the care of insane prisoners.
10. That the following criteria of fitness be employed in selecting subjects for adult probation:
 - (1) Habits of industry; (2) abstention from alcohol and drugs, or at least habitual temperance; (3) mental normality; (4) physical health of a sufficient degree to enable the probationer to engage successfully in his occupation; (a) negative Wasserman reaction and other evidence of freedom from all dangerous infections; (5) proof of employment which can be undertaken at once at a living wage; (6) possession of friends of good character who will co-operate with the officer in keeping in touch with the probationer; (7) proof of first offense, unless on the other points the offender has exceptionally strong recommendations; and that a psychopathic and medical laboratory be employed to assist the court in making the selection of probationers.
11. That those denied probation because of physical and mental defects be given institutional care until cured.
12. That the state law limiting the number of probation officers to 20 be so amended as to remove this limit; and that a preliminary investigation be made by the probation officer of each applicant for probation, and that probation officers be selected on a civil service basis.
13. That the state authorities take steps to provide suitable institutions for the segregation of feeble-minded children in addition to that at Lincoln.
14. That a new institution on the farm colony plan, which will provide a permanent home and suitable industrial training and occupation for feeble-minded persons of all ages, be established; that the present state law be so amended as to remove the age limit for admission to institutions for the feeble-minded; and that it be further amended so as to provide for the commitment

of defective delinquents both to the Lincoln State School and Colony and to the proposed new institution.

15. That farm colonies and hospitals recommended in this report relating to the treatment of mentally alienated and otherwise abnormal adult prisoners, be supplemented by places of detention for repeated juvenile delinquents. Such places of detention should be farm colonies, maintained by the State of Illinois.

16. That the Juvenile Court made definite provision for following up and assisting Chicago boys subsequent to their parole from St. Charles; and to this end that the number of parole officers be increased.

17. That the Board of Education enlarge its facilities (a) for vocational education; and (b) for vocational guidance; and that the system of part time and night schools in the city be extended, and that juvenile probationers be required to attend such school during the period of probation.

18. That further investigation be made of (a) the 1,200 or more prisoners in the House of Correction who have been committed to such an institution either in this city or elsewhere, more than three times; (b) the history of 500 or more Chicago boys during the period subsequent to the date of their parole from St. Charles; and (c) the history of Chicago men and women during the period subsequent to the date of their parole from the penal institutions of the state.