

The Crime of the Cities—Chicago

By CARL S. LOWDEN

IS THERE any crime wave in Chicago? How did it get there? What's keeping it? These questions are not easily answered. Certainly widespread vitiation exists along with impairment of the machine for disciplining lawbreakers. There is confusion, duplication of effort, inefficiency.

Why?
"The illicit handling of liquor," says Attorney-General Edward J. Brundage, "has been corrupting every force in the community, and the vilest of concoctions have been sold at prohibitive prices."

Henry Barrett Chamberlin, operating director of the Chicago crime commission which is the business men's own bludgeon for the reduction of lawlessness, stoutly maintains that there is no crime wave in the city. "We have been told," he says, "that the crime situation is an emergency demanding attention. It is not. Crime is an established business here. It has been centralized, organized, and commercialized."

Chamberlin quotes figures to substantiate his contention. In a comparison of 1919 with 1920 he points out that murders decreased fifty-one per cent, burglaries were reduced by ten per cent, and robberies show a falling off of six per cent.

As a matter of fact, if automobile killings be combined with the murder figures, the result is startling; for the entire complexion of the situation changes markedly. The decrease becomes an increase of eighteen per cent.

President Edwin W. Sims of the crime commission also dwells upon the murder record. For each million of population Chicago loses an annual 112 by violence, whereas Canada loses thirteen and Great Britain only nine. Because the thefts, burglaries, and robberies totaled 13,466 in 1919, Chicago now has the highest burglary insurance rate in the entire United States.

Neither Chamberlin nor Sims struck at the root of the crime menace. Business men are careful, cautious, and shrewd; they know the value of the dollar, and they do not desire to give any offense that may react upon them. Is that the reason, I wonder, why "moonshine" and bootlegging and the traffic in liquor are often winked at?

The crime commission praises Chief Charles C. Fitzmorris as "one of the best heads of the police department Chicago has ever had." Mayor William Hale Thompson appointed Fitzmorris last November tenth and gave him a free hand; since that time the new chief has weeded out thirty-four men and put the entire department on its toes. He has instituted a drive on crime, not on "hootch" which is the great contributing cause of the deplorable lawlessness in this city but upon crime itself. He avers that every recent crime of importance was committed by persons crazed with drugs.

There have been sundry rumors that the city police department is not wholeheartedly fighting the liquor traffic. The Prohibition Enforcement Bureau, the Federal organization, is not much more than a skeletonized machine. It has a big job on its hands. It has four states, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, to watch over; and it has a woefully inadequate supply of men at its headquarters for Chicago alone. The intent of the prohibition amendment to the Constitution included the idea of co-operation. Apparently the Federal forces are going it practically alone in Chicago.

Frank D. Richardson, prohibition commissioner for the four states, says the accomplishments of the first

year under the Eighteenth Amendment have been satisfactory in view of the smallness of their forces. The arrests numbered 4,481; 50,000 gallons of bonded spirits valued at three and one-half millions and fourteen hundred stills were destroyed. Richardson is pleased by the reduction in the number of disorderly conduct cases from 36,633 in 1919 to 32,305 in 1920.

The foregoing figures are encouraging. But Ralph W. Stone, prohibition agent for Illinois, handed out some figures of the other kind when he said that two and one-half millions of *spiritus frumenti* blanks had been issued to doctors in eight months, thereby releasing about 200,000 gallons of liquor. He thinks that approximately seventy-five per cent of this was used as a beverage. In fact, he attributes the greater part of the bootlegging in Chicago to the abuse of the prescription system by physicians and druggists.

In the past the permits for the removal of liquor from the warehouses could be issued by Stone or by Richardson. They have now taken steps to amalgamate their offices in order to keep a double check on and to reduce the outflow of permits. Much of the liquor taken out on permits never reaches the supposed destination. The loaded trucks are diverted to cabarets, restaurants and soft-drink houses, which the newspapers and the sophisticated citizens openly call saloons. Mayor Thompson avers the Federal people are largely responsible for liquor sales inasmuch as they handle the permits. Certainly the whole permit system must be revised if the Eighteenth Amendment is ever to have any real meaning in this city.

At Richardson's office I was told that most of the "moonshining" must be attributed to foreigners. When pressed for further information on the identity of these violators, an assistant in the office named Greeks, Slavs, Serbs, Russians and Italians. Many of these are Jews.

"Of what nationality," I asked, "are the liquor dealers in Chicago?"

"About ninety per cent of them are Jews."

"That much?" I queried doubtfully.

"Well," came the answer, "I'll say, conservatively, seventy-five per cent."

It is against the law to make public the names of liquor dealers. When arrests are made, however, the names appear in the newspapers. From one such list I extract, as a sample, the names beginning with the letter S, as follows: Sabatello, Sambur, Sass, Sbarboro, Schafer, Schillaci, Schoene, Schultz, Schwenck, Schermack, Shoop, Silverman, Sirovatka, Smeja, Soens, Soldewish and Sommerfeld. Some of the foregoing are noticeably Germanic.

At the office of United States Attorney Clyne I was informed that Jews constituted eighty per cent of the wholesale liquor dealers in Chicago. As I could not get a glimpse of the list, I am not prepared to say how accurate either of these estimates is; I could not verify them nor ascertain whether there had been any under or over statement.

None of the officials I visited seemed to think that crime is definitely organized in this city or that there

is any organized opposition to the Eighteenth Amendment. The United Societies was pointed out as an alliance of liberals anxious for the legal restoration of liquor; they try to influence public opinion by means of wide distribution of their official magazine, "The Champion of Fair Play."

The fight against illicit liquor does not make as much progress as it ought. In 1920 injunctions were asked against 150 cabarets, cafés and other liquor-selling places that were alleged to be public nuisances, but only seventeen were actually closed. Such success is a bit discouraging.

"All that I can do," said Judge K. M. Landis in granting one injunction while refusing to close the property, "is to restrain this man from continuing the nuisance complained of. I cannot close his place by this injunction. I have no idea this will have any effect, but it is the only thing I can do."

"I believe everyone here will realize that violators of the Volstead Act will have a run for their money in this court. But with the whole dictionary at its disposal, Congress has specifically stated what I can do, and I must do it. Whatever I might want to do personally is restrained by the wording of this section of the act."

Landis is the nightmare of Chicago's "booze" lawbreakers. He rules with as heavy a hand as the provisions of the Volstead Act will permit. On the fifteenth of January, 1921, he gave two men the limit of a year's imprisonment and a fine of a thousand dollars each; other sentences were for three months, six months, one hour; one man was fined two hundred and another ten dollars.

Hundreds of cases are now pending in Judge Landis' court. The mills of the law grind slowly. Some of these cases will be dismissed, others forgotten, witnesses will be gone or spirited away when certain cases come up; many of the guilty will escape from one cause or another.

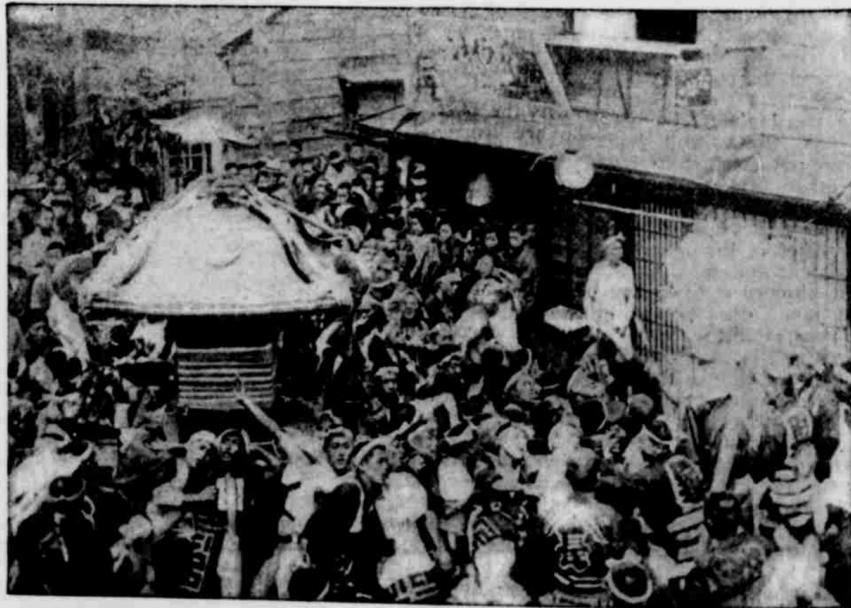
Judge Landis recently instructed the prohibition agents to "go out and get the big fellows—the brewers." January 25 three brothers owning one brewery were arrested on a charge of manufacturing and selling beer with an alcoholic content in excess of 1½ per cent. The case has not been tried, but prohibition agents say they are preparing to act against the heads of other breweries.

The Federal bureau also believes that 2,500 saloonkeepers violated the wartime prohibition. Squads are said to be out gathering evidence against these men. If this blow actually develops, it will hurt the liquor traffic.

The officials declare that wholesale dealers have been implicated in 1,800 state and government liquor cases. Approximately one half of these are Chicago cases. These figures are significant in view of the fact that three fourths of Chicago's wholesale liquor dealers are Jews.

Chicago is one of the wildest and wettest cities between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. Is it wild because it's wet, or wet because it's wild? I can't answer the conundrum. The present drive apparently has not greatly lessened crime. Perhaps a drive against grafting politicians and the locking up of the friends of criminals would be more effective. There is still a mountain of crime in Chicago, and the law-enforcing bodies are moles beside it.

Japanese Customs That Are Different



CELEBRATING NEW YEAR'S DAY IN JAPAN

Before the days of prohibition big cities of the United States used to be able to exhibit some pretty joyous celebrators but none of them ever exceeded in abandonment this merry throng of young Japs attired in their native costume and bent on getting every ounce of enjoyment possible out of the festival. "We Won't Go Home Until Morning" is expressed in the attitude of each and every one.

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ADVERTISING MOVIE SHOWS IN JAPAN

This interesting photograph shows a street in Tokyo, entirely given up to motion picture theaters. The curious looking signs in front of the buildings are advertisements of the throwers to be seen inside.