

# IS THERE A CRIME WAVE? NOBODY KNOWS

## Adequate Police Records Lacking in Toledo and Many Other Large Cities. New Census To Give Data. Standard Uniform System Available at Small Cost

*Editor's Note: This is the second of a series of articles on modern police methods in American cities, by Howard Stephenson, associate editor of The News-Bee. Mr. Stephenson has made an intensive study of police departments in many American cities during the past month.*

By HOWARD STEPHENSON  
**IS THERE** a crime wave and if so what is it like? We hear a great deal about cycles or waves of crime, and yet there is nobody in America in a position to demonstrate anything of the sort.

While larger cities which keep some sort of uniform statistics seem to show a trend toward organized gangster crime, there is no way of telling by guesswork just how extensive this has become the country over or how it compares with conditions, say, 10 years ago.



Stephenson. The problem of Toledo police in coping with organized crime and criminal gangs is no different in its main aspects from that of any metropolitan center.

Toledo has not as yet, however, adopted the system of crime records which police authorities the country over are recommending. The advantage of this system is that it is standard, uniform and complete.

**THE** haphazard method of having detectives saunter thru police court in the vague hope that some known criminal wanted for murder or big-time robbery may have been arrested on some lesser charge is old-fashioned. It goes back to village days.

That the horse-and-buggy era still is reflected in some measure in police methods is not surprising. The amazing thing is that Toledo police under their handicaps have performed during the past two years such notable work in keeping the gangster at bay. Compared to many other cities, Toledo's condition in respect to organized gangs is fortunate.

But with the complexities which the prohibition and post-war era have brought to modern police work, with the widespread adop-

tion of scientific and shrewd business methods in large-scale crime, it is hardly fair to ask the police to depend so largely on Lady Luck as they are now forced to do.

Not only have criminologists no adequate data on the amount or prevalence of crime losses, there is no central agency which has at its disposal a complete list of all the law enforcement agencies and police courts of the entire country.

**THE** year 1930 is to witness a tremendous change. Not only is the department of justice at Washington installing a fingerprint "clearing house" and record station for the entire country, but a new spirit of co-operation between police authorities of various states and cities is much in evidence.

The 1930 census, for the first time in American history, will provide an adequate budget of information on crime and criminals. This is expected to be of incalculable help to the police of every city. It will be of even greater assistance to the criminologist, who studies the trends of crime. It is entirely probable that by the middle of next year we shall be able to make some fairly accurate conjectures as to the status of crime and the operation of criminal gangs. At present, except for local conditions, it is virtually impossible to do so.

The statistician comes in for a good deal of razzing by persons who style themselves practical instead of theoretical. And yet there has probably been no more practical or helpful work done in police methods in the past decade than that of John B. Blandford of the municipal research bureau of Cincinnati in working out a system of uniform police records.

**THE** writer spent some time in Mr. Blandford's office recently, going over this new mechanical system of recording complete information regarding the prisoners who fall into the Cincinnati police net.

A colored card, about six by four inches, contains spaces for some thousands of details. All crimes and misdemeanors are separated into 16 classes. When we consider the thousands and thousands of laws now current in Ohio, it is obviously a mighty advantage to catalog the various crimes in this simple list of classifications.

The card is punched just as a street car conductor used to punch a transfer. Then at police headquarters in Cincinnati there is a machine which sorts and assembles these thousands of cards into all sorts of classifications. The clerk in the statistical bureau has a code which enables him to translate the results of this mechanical sorting process.

For instance, if it is desired to learn how many thefts from the person (pocket picking) cases have come up in the past six months, this can be readily discovered in not more than 15 minutes. And so it goes for the entire catalog of crimes. Full information about the prisoner, his age, color, complexion, financial status, marital



and family status, past records, etc., are available instantly.

**SUCH** a tremendous impression has this device made on the police world that it has been adopted and put to practical use in Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo and some 25 or 30 other large American cities.

When these data are available for all the large cities of the country, then we shall really be in a position to learn something about crime. Then we shall be able to say, over a period of years, whether there is a crime wave or a rising tide of crime, what crimes if any are on the increase and which if any on the decline.

The new system has been officially adopted by the International Association of Police Chiefs and strongly recommended to all cities. The standardization and uniformity of police records is what makes the largest appeal to practical police authorities.

So far as Toledo is concerned, the installation of this system would do a great deal toward enabling the police chief and the safety director to proceed intelligently against any particular up-trend of crime. They would have the facts, readily and easily available. At present, the Toledo's Ber-

lillon bureau is one of the best in the country, the police records as a whole cannot be said to be up to standard.

The expense involved is comparatively slight. To equip Toledo's police department with the standard record system would probably mean an outlay of some \$4000, a fairly high estimate.

**L**OCAL police officials who have studied the system are enthusiastic about it from a practical standpoint. If the standard record system is adopted in Toledo during 1930, this city will have taken its place in line with the leaders of the country in improved police methods. Coupled with the police radio system now in use in Detroit and elsewhere, and discussed in the first article in this series, it will be an effective contribution toward applying brains instead of brawn to the detection and capture of criminals.

Another article on "Batting the Gangs" will appear tomorrow.

# COPS LEARN CROOKS' WILES IN SCHOOL

## Toledo Training for Rookie Patrolmen Seen as Inadequate. Louisville Crime Course Embraces Six Weeks of Intensive Study

*Editor's Note* After an intensive study of police departments in many large American cities, extending over a period of six weeks, Howard Stephenson, assistant editor of *The News-Bee*, has written a series of articles on police methods, of which this is the third.

### HOWARD STEPHENSON

**T**HE MOST of us, the criminal is a scoundrel and the policeman a flatfoot. We have become accustomed to sticking these labels on the members of the two armies engaged in a constant and desperate warfare and one of the greatest tactics that police have overcome is to get the public to believe to some extent at least, these more or less false assumptions.

The co-operation of the public in detecting crime and in apprehending criminals is naturally of prime importance.



Stephenson.

With machine guns, tear gas, chemical explosives, and the most up-to-date physical and scientific apparatus and knowledge at their disposal, the criminal gangs can no longer be said to be lacking in brains and shrewdness. How, then, can the police hope to match them? From the newest patrolman to the chief of the safety department, it is increasingly important that they should be familiar with their own duties and privileges under the law and should have at least a fundamental knowledge of the complicated science of crime detection.

**C**IVIL service examinations for admission to the police force are more or less of a joke in this and other large cities and has so been recognized for a long time. The best job the community can hope to do under the circumstances and the political handicaps of police administration is to provide proper training after men have joined the force.

The accomplishments along this line in the police school at Louisville, Ky. a city only slightly smaller than Toledo, are so remarkable that the head of the Louisville school, George T. Ragsdale, has become recognized as a national authority. Detroit, New York, Berkeley, Cal., and lately Chicago have instituted successful police schools.

In the entire country there are, however, but 16 cities where the police schools are worthy of the name, tho perhaps a total of 40, including Toledo, make some kind of a stab at training coppers as to their duties.

In the Toledo police department there is plenty of latent ability, and certain branches can show a high-ranking record along effec-



tive modern. It is, therefore, local departments... has lagged far behind... training which... newcomers to the force.

**F**ROM 8 a. m. to 4 p. m., with an hour and a half off for lunch, recruit policemen in Louisville are put thru an intensive training course, which turns them out as qualified patrolmen. To complete this course the new patrolman must attend a minimum of six weeks, seven days a week, at the police school.

The 10 courses required include law, local geography, records and reports organization and duties, rule and regulations, traffic, fire and rescue, practical patroling, investigation and identification system, physical culture, and firearms.

It frequently happens that the course runs eight instead of the minimum six weeks depending somewhat on the quality of men in the recruit class.

Surely no argument is needed to point out the advantage of this system over the practice of handing a new copper a badge and a

stick measuring him for a uniform and telling him where and when to report for active duty. In Louisville, the recruit patrolman does not engage in active police work until he has been properly qualified.

**O**NE important result of the police school is that many unfit men are weeded out because they are unable to grasp the problems of practical police work. It is to be expected, of course, that veteran patrolmen who have never seen from the ranks are at first inclined to pool-pool any innovation which seems to smack of the highbrow. They have learned their jobs and often learned them well, in the school of hard knocks. But during the year it has taken them to acquire this knowledge, which ought to be gained by direct instruction of a few weeks, the public has been footing the bill.

Every step in introducing brains instead of brawn into the police department works a rapid economy.

Detroit's police school, more close at hand, follows somewhat

the procedure in Louisville, but because of the larger area and population to be policed, does not provide the parallel to Toledo conditions that Louisville does.

The Louisville system, as Mr. Ragsdale points out in a later issue of the *Annals* of the American Academy, embraces far more than a preliminary course for rookie copper. After they have passed the preliminary course they are actually engaged in the same classes for one hour a week the next 40 weeks. Peacekeeping duties are slightly different also go on for the first 40 weeks of the period.

### TO TRAIN

**T**he other course of 40 weeks is described. It embraces criminal evidence, court procedure, criminology, fingerprinting, criminal identification, procedure on a case, photography and microscopy.

To cap all this, there is a monthly session of two hours in which the higher executive force are summoned. At these sessions there is a paper on some of the larger aspects of police work and general discussion.

Toledo police executives have been making strenuous efforts some time to adapt the police school to local conditions. The success has been made, the school now provided for regular patrolmen and their lives is inadequate. It is expected, therefore, that it will be renewed in the course of the next few weeks and that 1930 will see the establishment of a real police school on a modern basis, including and equipping police branches to do a better job of coping with the organized

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