

Increasing Legislative Harshness Cause Behind Prison Outbreaks, Declares Texan

By CHARLES P. STEWART
Central Press Staff Writer
Washington.—Sen. Tom Connally, of Texas, thinks it might be better to kill habitual criminals outright than to have them shuttling up our penitentiaries, under life sentences.

"That is, he feels this way about it as a matter of cold-blooded logic.

In actual practice, he is no special advocate of capital punishment—except in extreme cases.

He takes what he considers a "rational view" of lawbreaking. "Himself an old prosecutor, he is frank to say that he opposes coddling bad men, deeming it ticklish."

Nevertheless, he questions the justice or wisdom of making life sentences the invariable rule for mere repetitions of offending—regardless of the offenses' enormity.

However, if such severity is defensible at all, he argues, then he believes that death is equally so—besides being more satisfactory.



SEN. TOM CONNALLY

... from society's standpoint, and perhaps more merciful to those who transgress society's regulations.

Like most folk, Senator Connally has noticed the generally increasing harshness of America's criminal statutes in recent years—including "life" for "repeaters" in several states—especially in New York, under the Baumes law, probably the most widely advertised example of that type of legislation.

"Indeed," he comments, "we have a provision of the kind in Texas—applicable in certain circumstances.

Violent convict outbreaks at Dannemora and Auburn, with threats of trouble at Sing Sing—attributed largely to multiplication in the number of desperate "ifs" behind the bars—naturally have attracted his attention also.

While the life problem is not mentioned in connection with the mutiny at Leavenworth, the Texan surmises that the uprising there was mainly in imitation of the Dannemora and Auburn revolts.

"Too many lives"—the senator suspects.

Overcrowding is spoken of as

BUILDERS OF GOD'S HOUSE

Ezek. 3:10-13; 6:14-18; Psa. 34:1-4

WE have seen how glorious in the eyes of prophetic and saintly souls was the prospect of the return of exiled Israel from Babylon to the homeland in Palestine, made possible by the decree of Cyrus.

Unfortunately the actual outcome of events in history seldom measures up to the glorious visions and the hopes and purposes of prophetic idealists. It has been so in all the world's history.

The Pilgrim fathers and the Revolutionary pioneers laid great foundations for American democracy and in ideal our democracy is the highest thing that the world has achieved, but the actuality, not to disparage all that is good and great in America, comes far short of what the founders of the nation dreamed of and hoped for. Our progress in democracy means progress toward an ideal that we have never yet attained.

Some Weaknesses

So in this instance of the return of the Babylon exiles to Palestine history records some factors of weakness and failure as well as records of remarkable achievement, under Zerubbabel.

In moving toward a homeland associated with an ideal Zion, one might have supposed that the first thought of these exiles would have been to re-establish an adequate place of worship.

Perhaps the people did the best that was possible in their poverty and in the hard circumstances that confronted them in re-establishing the national life. It would seem, however, that to some extent they were more concerned about building houses for themselves than about building the House of God.

However, the need of a center for the religious life was recognized and in spite of all the obstacles that were raised, the people finally took up the task of restoring the Temple. They had, in fact, made an earlier beginning, but for 16 years the work had ceased and it was only under the inspiration of the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah that the work was renewed in earnest.

The Temple as planned in the enfeebled condition of the people was much less than the great Temple of Solomon had been; in fact the contrast was so great that when the foundations were laid the old men who had seen the first Temple wept. But joy was mingled with the weeping, inas-

much as those who loved the place of worship welcomed any return to the former glory and purpose.

Desires Renewed Work

The lesson tells how this renewed work under the watching eye of Heaven was carried through to completion, and it is fitting that along with this is set the Song of Praise from the 84th Psalm, which expressed something of the joy of a resting place for the soul.

The lovers of the church today may well find in this Psalm the expression of his own praise. Poor indeed is that community where there is no pride in the maintenance of the church. Pride in the church may not be a very high or worthy motive, and yet one sees in the great cathedrals and the beautiful little churches which were built by the people of the Middle Ages, the expression of something enlightening and ennobling. There was no deadness of soul in a community that could produce such works.

Unfortunately the church has been too often associated with things that are commonplace and drab. People are content to have beautiful things in their homes, but they do not always feel the need of beauty in the House of God.

One does not need to attach too great a significance to external things in religion to point out how much it means when every detail of the church makes some appeal to man's instincts and appreciation. We have been too apt to forget that beauty should be in the sanctuary as well as strength. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Increase in the proportion of extremely long termers—a constant piling in of new arrivals, with very few departures of time-expired men, to make room for them—necessarily soon congests any prison.

The alternative remedies which suggest themselves to Senator Connally are:

1. A swifter turnover.
2. Elimination of most of the lifers by snuffing them out altogether.

The senator does not recognize a merely long term as an excuse for extermination; a long term still has an end to it, but not a life term—under a law like the Baumes law.

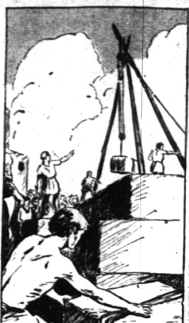
The Lone Star salon argues: Having decided as definitely as that that a certain individual is too hopelessly at odds with its entire system ever to be permitted at liberty again, why should society keep him alive at all—like a wild animal in a cage—maybe for years—an expense, nuisance and a danger.

Assuredly, thinks the senator, it is not because of any regard for the criminal's own preferences in the matter, on the part of those who pass such laws.

No, says the Texan—It is because public opinion prescribes death as the penalty for but a very few of the worst imaginable offenses—and refuses to recognize a mere accumulation of minor misdeeds as equivalent to any single crime in the major category.

He expresses his doubts whether they can properly be bunched together to justify life imprisonment either.

"Logical legislation always makes trouble," he concludes.



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LIBRARY NOTES

By NANCY B. THOMAS

Are you interested in turtles? If you are you know how few books may be found about them. Since they are marine and fresh water reptiles, chapters devoted to them may be found in books which have the general subject of reptiles, but to find a book which is written about turtles alone is difficult.

The Baldwin Library has purchased this past week a paper-covered monograph by H. L. Babcock entitled "Turtles of New England." It is published by the Boston Society of Natural History. It has beautifully colored plates which look like water color drawings. It is a scientific piece of work, not popularized in any way and is limited in scope as the title implies. Perhaps some day we shall have a book about the turtles of Michigan or at least of the middle west.

Vacation days are not over yet and books on fishing, tennis, archery, golf, swimming and camping are in demand. An interesting looking book is "Bait-casting" by William C. Voght. The author looks like Douglas Fairbanks, that is, he looks as though he enjoyed life and is credited with being an expert fisherman. He tells of rods and reels, baits and bait-casting and gives special advice on

how to manage muskellunge. The book is illustrated with photographs showing fish and fishermen in all conditions, also a set of motion-pictures of a small-mouthed bass jumping for food.

Now that golf and archery are played as twin sports it is probable that archery will have a greater vogue. Dr. Robert Elmer, former champion archer of the United States, has a detailed book of 400 pages on the subject. It gives a history of the sport here and in Great Britain, it tells how to make bows and arrows, how to shoot, how to conduct tournaments and matches, and ends with a glossary of 500 words. Many of the words listed are of Scotch origin. It does not give the rules for playing golf and archery together but if the interest in the combination continues we shall have a book about that before long.

Jack Behr, 12-year-old Brooklyn boy is hailed by experts as a coming tennis star. He is a cousin of Karl Behr, former national doubles champion.

Mrs. Maria Quirk of London sued to cancel her lease of an apartment because she found beetles in the beds, but lost her case.

Fifty thousand gallons of whiskey was recently reported stolen from a government bonded warehouse in Chicago.

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In addition to the Auto Race on Saturday afternoon, September 7, with many of the country's best-known pilots competing, there will be trotting and pacing races from Monday to Friday inclusive, with the Governor's Trophy Race on Wednesday afternoon, September 4.



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