

DR. CARLETON SIMON

116 EAST 55TH STREET
NEW YORK

July 21, 1926

Dr. Lawrence Kolb
Surgeon, U. S. P. H. S.
Ellis Island, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Kolb:-

I have just received your letter of inquiry and am glad to reply and to furnish you with any facts I may have and shall answer each inquiry as fully as possible.

The Statement that there were 200,000 addicts in the City of New York or in the State of New York does not emanate from me. Such estimate would be preposterous. This is an exaggeration that is purely the child of imagination and has been circulated by propagandists and is untrue and contrary to facts. About seven years ago when the law in this State provided for the registration of addicts and when a narcotic clinic was running in this city, I believe that there were some 38,000 addicts registered in this State. This law attracted addicts from all over the country and they flocked here and these figures were never a true index of the proportion of addicts to population. I also do believe that there were numerous addicts that did not register but the greater number of these were purely medical cases that required their daily dosage because of incurable diseases. Again there were numerous instances where individuals registered as addicts who were not addicts and who in this way secured additional narcotics for someone in whom they were interested, these cases coming under my observation when I served this Commission gratuitously as medical examiner for a period of about one and half years. When the clinic closed and the law was repealed police activity, then under my direction, forced out of New York many of these addicts. This was verified by the numerous requests coming from various law enforcement agencies all over the country desiring information of addicts, whom they had arrested and who formerly lived here. It is my opinion that six years ago there were about thirty thousand addicts in this State and about twenty thousand in the City of New York. Gradually this number has dwindled, some dying, some being cured and others forced out of this part of the country. When I severed my connections with the N. Y. Police Department the first of this year I estimated that there were about twenty five thousand addicts in the State of which number about fifteen thousand were in this City. That addiction has been gradually controlled is demonstrated by what I have termed the peak-age. This is the age of the greatest number arrested. Six years ago this was 23 years of age. Gradually this has increased until at present it is about 30 years of age, showing that few new addicts were created and that the balance are the confirmed addict. This fact is further verified that during the year 1923 of close to three thousand addicts coming under my official notice, there were some twenty-one new recruits to addiction in this number. The following year there were but seven new recruits arrested and last year but three new ~~addicts~~ or recent addicts arrested. Undoubtedly there has been a large number added to addiction but their condition did not as yet call attention to their addiction. There has been a rapid decline in the number addicted yet constant vigilance is necessary in police activity to control this situation.

*corrected at request of sender
rechecked*

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In reply to your second inquiry as to how long I was in charge of the Narcotic Bureau of the N. Y. Police Department and how many arrests were made during that period including those who were self committed to institutional care, I wish to say that I was a Special Deputy Commissioner in charge of this work for a trifle over five years. During this period of time approximately some sixteen thousand arrests were made inclusive of those who were sent as self-committers to institutional care. This number also includes about one thousand narcotic traffickers who were not addicts. These arrests also represent numerical arrests not individuals for many of them were arrested over this period a number of times. In a survey that I made during the year 1923 I called attention on the chacking up of these arrests statistics. During the years 1921, 1922 and 1923 these arrests totalled some 9,637. When checked up it was found that this number represented some 8,174 individuals or a little over seventeen percent were re-arrests. If this same proportion were applied to to about fifteen thousand addiction arrest case coming under my official attention this would represent about 12,456 ~~individuals~~ individuals. Many of these did not reside in New York City and belonged to the large floating population that we have here.

In reply to your third inquiry whether I stated that fully 75% of the criminals were addicts and if I can give you any figures, I would say that I never made such a wild statement. I have however collected definite figures that I am glad to give you. During a period of one month, in what is termed the "line up" at Police Headquarters in short where prisoners charged with felony are inspected for the purpose of future identification, 14% of this men charged with felony were found to be narcotic addicts. In another survey I made about four years ago of various penal institutions all over the country, the replies averaged about nine percent of the prison population as being addicts or having at some time been addicted. Of course if you take the figures of the penitentiary or the workhouse in New York City, where the addicts are sent you will naturally obtain a much higher percentage. I believe that the 75% you allude to was the result of other statistics which showed that 75% of all of those arrested for narcotic violations had a criminal record. This does not mean however that 75% of the criminals are addicts. In the group of 8,174 individuals previously referred to in answer to your second inquiry our records showed that they had been arrested previously 32,696 times in all sections of the country and for every crime in the calender. That is such criminality was dispersed over the entire group, some never having been arrested previously but the number of previous arrests applied to the entire group.

In answer to your fourth inquiry as to their being on record in the N. Y. Police Department 100,000 narcotic addicts and that you understand that I collected this number, I would say that I have estimated this number as close to this figure with the distinction that a very large number of these records include also the illicit seller. In this record which was assembled through canvassing seven hundred cities and some twenty four nations and which has been termed by me The International Narcotic Criminal Identification Bureau there were thousands of

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fingerprints and pictures from Canada, a very large number from France, from various parts of Europe and South America. These records also included those received from Australia. On the other hand these records also included the entire narcotic records of the N. Y. Police Department many years back.

In your fifth inquiry you ask me how many school children I have come in contact with and what action should be taken to protect children against the narcotic peddler. This is another one of those absurd and foolish ideas that have been spread all over this country by propagandists, one gentleman who has identified himself with an educational narcotic crusade, sometime ago stated that there were in one Borough in Brooklyn some seventeen thousand school children who were addicts. This statement was later rescinded but the damage was done. I have seen infants nursing their addict mother who were addicts but I have never seen a single school child who was addicted. In fact I have sent out hundreds of letters, investigated every rumor that came to my notice, challenged and defied anyone to present a case that was not "hear say" evidence and none has come to my attention. Every year in this City there is registered close to 1,000,000 school children of all grades with the Department of Education and through the years there is not a single case on record in this department nor in the records of seven hundred cities or twenty four nations is there is a record of a school child being an addict. Children have no money to buy narcotics and are not used as a target by the narcotic sellers, except in some instances to purvey or carry narcotics or to deliver them. I believe that it would be criminal ~~to arouse in a child's mind any knowledge of the effect of narcotics for it would by the power of suggestion endanger that child and defeat the very purpose.~~ to arouse in a child's mind any knowledge of the effect of narcotics for it would by the power of suggestion endanger that child and defeat the very purpose. In this numerous authorities upon educational matters concur. It would not be unlike teaching a child the wisdom or the error of birth control. Some things children should not be taught because of their mental instability, their natural curiosity and their sensitiveness to suggestion.

In your last inquiry you ask me if I have been correctly quoted in estimating that there were 1,000,000 or more addicts in the U. S. and if not correctly quoted to give an approximation of the minimum and maximum number and in reply I wish to most emphatically deny that any such statement was ever made by me. When numerous opinions were advanced, prior to the amount calculated by you, my estimation was the lowest of all and that was four years ago at a maximum of 250,000. I do believe that this figure can be further reduced to a maximum of about 200,000 and a minimum of about 135,000 or a general average of about 165,000 addicts for the U. S. My figures include however not only the underworld addict but also the number of non-medical addiction cases that ~~many~~ are being treated by various physicians as either incurable addiction cases or temporarily receiving treatment for a cure. In this relation I would call your attention to a Narcotic Survey of the State of New York that I made in 1923 which showed that this State with a population of about 11,000,000 there were only treated by the physicians in one year 1509 addiction cases. These cases were not separated as to groups, the non-medical from the medical case of the patient who required narcotics because of incurable disease such as cancer. In a Survey of narcotic conditions in the State of Louisiana early this year such groups were separately surveyed. Louisiana because of reasons unnecessary to mention here showed a far higher percentage of addicts being treated than were treated

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by the physicians of the State of New York and showed that 627 addiction cases were treated in one year by the medical profession. It has been stated by misinformed individuals that the medical profession treated untold numbers that never came to the attention of the police, yet accepting these exceptionally high figures in this State, with a population of 2,000,000 as applicable to the general population of the U. S. it would give a total of 34,485 addiction cases as being treated by the entire medical profession of the U. S. This is obviously and unquestionably an exaggeration and 10,000 addiction cases would be high but nearer to the truth. If you will add this 10,000 to the minimum figures calculated by you ~~as of the underworld users~~ as of the underworld users, you will see that my minimum estimation is extremely close to the amount calculated by you.

In conclusion I believe that narcotic addiction is on the wane and that only by united efforts of the various authorities can it be suppressed. It is both a public health problem and a police problem. Whether an addict ~~is a criminal or a criminal becomes an addict~~ becomes a criminal or a criminal becomes an addict the fact remains that they spring from the same soil- namely from the group of mental, moral and psychical inferiors.

If you require any further elucidation upon statements made herein, please advise me.

Very truly

Carlton Simon