

"In the case of a well-educated man with a long history of sex misconduct with boys it was alleged that the offences with which he was charged were due to a period of responsibility connected with his occupation which made it necessary for him to overcome his sense of inferiority, and that he dominated his victims to effect this. It was also asserted that his conduct was obsessional in character, and that he believed it was right, and that he was a suitable case of psychotherapy. The medical examiner apparently only obtained a cross-sectional view of the man's career, for as a result of investigation and examination it was found that the assumptions could not be substantiated. Similar episodes in the past could not be attributed to environmental responsibilities, and the offences proved to be premeditated and were carried out at the opportune moment. The man was bi-sexual and anxious to accept the medical excuses in order to avoid punishment. But when approached with a view to psychological treatment he became co-operative only in so far as he was likely to gain personal profit and preferential treatment.

"A man sentenced to penal servitude for a sadistic crime had been detained previously in a mental hospital. The medical superintendent was satisfied, however, that he had feigned insanity in order to avoid imprisonment. His sex anomaly was marked and he was mentally abnormal in other directions. It was suggested at his trial that he should receive a course of psychotherapy rather than imprisonment. But he was hostile, insincere, untruthful, and quite unreliable, and no change in his personality could be expected as he had no desire to remedy his condition although he wished to avoid its consequences.

"In some cases which appear to be at first suitable for psychological treatment it is found that the anti-social behaviour of the offender is fundamentally a demonstration of personality traits which are so inherent or so firmly established as to be immovable. Broadly speaking, the most suitable cases for treatment have been, so far, those in whom environmental circumstances have influenced a personality already predisposed to react to accidental effects.

"It is forgotten too often that the causes of criminal behaviour are frequently identical with those associated with non-criminal behaviour. Moreover, the psychological investigation of criminals appears sometimes to be recommended on the assumption that the same mechanisms which operate in neurotic patients operate in criminals who present no evidence of neurosis. Many criminals, however, like the sadist referred to above, are unsuitable for treatment because their criminal habits satisfy them to such an extent that they refuse to be divorced therefrom.

"In many cases of apparently abnormal behaviour we are not dealing in fact with individual conduct, but with group conduct, and it is common knowledge that the increased suggestibility of a group leads its members to commit crimes which they would fear to undertake if unsupported by the gang. In some cases a change of environment may be more profitable than a prolonged psychological investigation, in spite of the fact that the mentally unstable are often attracted to the smaller groups within the community and that their conduct opposes the generally accepted standards of correct behaviour.

"It is a matter of anxiety to some psychologists who are not immediately concerned with criminal problems, as well as to those who are so engaged, that proper self-control and restraint have come to be discounted and identified with repression by delinquents, criminals, and others whose anti-social conduct is encouraged by admonitions to self-expression in sex and other matters. Many criminals avoid reality and refuse to acknowledge their own faults or accept the consequences of their own misconduct. The doctrine of self-expression is for them a comforting salvation, and it is not remembered always that psychological investigations may explain criminal conduct but are not intended to excuse it."

Dr. East further states, *inter alia*, in his report:—

"Propaganda directed towards the psychiatric treatment of crime, although perhaps necessary and advantageous in some respects, is a dangerous weapon, since it inevitably leads people to believe that benefits will be delivered although failures may be more frequent than successes. It must be remembered that this method of treating crime has not at present produced any impressive series of carefully tested results which can be used to assess scientifically its practical value. There are observers, in this country and elsewhere, who are concerned about the unfortunate position which may result from excessive propagandism in matters affecting mental hygiene; and those who await impatiently a critical survey of the position should be reminded that the application of psychiatric treatment to criminals must follow the method of science."

He also adds that "it is obvious that psychological treatment is unnecessary and undesirable in the majority of criminal offenders, that harm might result through mental invalidism being suggested militating against other remedial influences".

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

The net revenue and expenditure figures from the Prisons Administrative vote may be briefly quoted to the effect that on the one hand there was a substantial increase in cost of salaries of approximately £8,000 due to restoration and additional appointments by reason of the shortened working-hours of the staff, and a 2-per-cent. reduction in revenue amounting to £1,300 due to reduced labour available. On the other hand there has been a decrease of approximately £6,000 in the general and industries working expenditure. The net result represents an increased net expenditure of approximately £3,000 compared with the previous financial year.