

By Lane County Circuit Judge

Probation Called 'Best Medicine We Have' for Crime

"Probation is no wonder drug that can cure crime. It is simply the best medicine we have today."

Lane County Circuit Judge Roland Rodman made that declaration Tuesday before members of the Eugene Rotary Club.

"Prisons as they operate today," he said, "are an anachronism. And I predict that in the lifetimes of many of us, prisons will become limited to the psychopathic criminal."

The concept of probation, said Rodman, is a relatively modern-day concept. In the United States, Massachusetts was the first state to adopt a probation law in 1878, he said. Texas became the 48th state to adopt one in 1947.

Prisons have failed to reform criminals, Rodman said. Nineteen out of every 20 prison inmates today will be freed, he said, "and three out of four of them will commit offenses again."

The concept of probation followed early English common

law, he said, where the rule was "an eye for an eye" and where any number of offenses were considered capital crimes.

During the reign of King Henry VIII, he said, 70,000 persons were executed in England, an average of six a day. And as late as 1800 there were still 200 offenses considered punishable by death.

Some offenders were sentenced to 10 or 20 years in solitary confinement. "The results were insanity, not reformation," he said.

Criminal law, he said, traditionally was based on a three-fold purpose: To reform, to deter others from committing similar offenses, and as retribution or revenge.

The third purpose was considered a natural one under English common law. But today, said Rodman, "the overwhelming majority of judges and religious leaders feel that revenge is not a part of criminal law."

If that is agreed upon, he said, then the only remaining purpose of criminal law is to reform and to deter. "Yet traditional methods of punishment have failed in these," he said.

"The severity of the sentence does not deter the criminal," Rodman said. In fact, he said, "the longer the incarceration, the more likely is the convict to commit crimes again."

In Oregon, he said, a defendant may be placed on probation at the discretion of the judge, with the exception of crimes involving certain sex offenses and in some cases where there has been assault with a deadly weapon.

Before a person is placed on probation, he said, a probation officer prepares a thorough case history of the defendant, which usually takes from three to four weeks and includes such information as a record of employment, schooling, family background, personality traits and aggravating or mitigating circumstances. A judge places much dependence on the probation report, he said, before reaching a decision.

Proponent of YCC Cites Lane Project

By A. ROBERT SMITH
For the Register-Guard

WASHINGTON (Special) — When Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy urged Congress to authorize creation of a Youth Conservation Corps, he cited as a favorable example of success in this field an Oregon forestry work camp set up in Lane County by state and county authorities in 1961.

"Twenty boys took part," Kennedy advised the Senate Labor Committee. "They were neither juvenile delinquents nor 'All Americans,' but more or less average youngsters from impoverished families, who had begun to lose serious interest in schools."

"These boys worked on full-scale Forestry Department projects that summer—clearing and pruning, thinning and park-building. Officials agree that the program was a total success. The boys did one-third more work than average adult crews, according to State Forestry Department estimates. But, most important, they all returned to school with increased enthusiasm."

This was held up as a prime example of what the Kennedy Administration would like to encourage throughout the country through a YCC program patterned largely on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the Roosevelt Administration. President Kennedy has this proposal high on his legislative priority list for 1963.

This is the first major bill to be taken up in hearings by both Senate and House. Among its numerous sponsors are Sen. Maurice B. Neuberger, Rep. Edith Green and Sen. Wayne Morse.

The YCC would be composed of young men from 16 to 22 years of age who would enroll for six months at a time and serve up to two years. They would be paid \$60 per month and receive subsistence and health care.

The administration wants to start with 15,000 boys the first year and build up to 60,000 in each of the next four years of the program. The YCC boys would be used for conservation work in the national forests and parks and other recreational areas primarily; but one-third

of the Corps would be available for cooperative projects with the states in state parks, for example, for which the state would pay half the cost.

When half the members of the Kennedy cabinet went to Capitol Hill last week to urge approval of this bill, they cited two primary reasons for reviving what was a depression-era program:

1. There are about 700,000 out-of-school unemployed youths, and the number is constantly rising. This is not only true in the cities but also in rural areas due to the decline in agriculture labor requirements.

2. There is a vast accumulation of laborious tasks that would help conserve many natural resources and improve and extend recreational facilities for an outdoor-conscious expanding population.

Labor Secretary W. Willard Wirtz, whose department would administer the YCC program, estimates the cost per boy at \$3,985 annually, not counting cost of materials used in work projects. The proposed federal budget for the coming fiscal year includes \$60 million to start the program with 15,000 boys.

SEHS Junior Wins Legion Speech Test

John Gillespie of Eugene, a junior at South Eugene High School, has been named district winner in an American Legion oratorical contest.

He will participate Saturday in the state competition in Portland.

Gillespie, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Darwin K. Gillespie of 2075 McMillan St., Eugene, won the right to represent the district in the competition last Saturday, at competition in Eugene.

The competition held for high school students in the American Legion's District No. 3, including Lane, Linn and Benton counties, was on a topic dealing with the United States Constitution.

Gillespie, as first place winner, received the W. Walter Stuart oratorical trophy, a new award for his school and a \$25 bond.

Runner-up was Edward Smith, also a junior at South Eugene High School. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George E. Smith, 480 E. 32nd Ave., Eugene.

Smith's prize was an American Legion medal.

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