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FIRST U.N. CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION
OF CRIME AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

THE CONGRESS VISITED THREE SWISS PENAL ESTABLISHMENTS YESTERDAY
AND HEARD A LECTURE BY MR. JORGE BOCOBO, CHAIRMAN OF THE CODE
COMMISSION (PHILIPPINES) TODAY

The Congress did not hold a plenary meeting yesterday, 25 August, as the participants visited the open penal establishments at Witzwill and Bellechasse and the closed establishment at Thorberg.

The members of the Congress were welcomed during each visit by the director of the establishment. In the evening they were entertained by the authorities of the Canton of Berne and Mr. de Steiger, President of the Congress, expressed its gratitude to the authorities who had arranged the visit.

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This morning the plenary meeting of the Congress opened at 9.30 a.m. with Mr. Paul Cornil, Vice-President, in the Chair.

Mr. Jorge Bocobo, Chairman of the Code Commission (Philippines), gave a general account of modern trends in the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders in Asia and the Far East.

Mr. Bocobo described the situation in the Philippines. Discussing open institutions, he described the penal colony of Iwahig (Island of Palawan) 41,000 hectares in area, where the 3,604 persons serving sentence may live with their families. The travel expenses of a colonist's family and children are paid by the Government. The Government also pays for the passages of women engaged to marry deserving colonists, and allows them to live with their husbands in the penal colony after marriage. Each colonist receives a plot of land which he may cultivate during his sentence. Thereafter he is granted title to another piece of land not less than six hectares in size so that he and his family may, if they so desire, settle permanently on the Island of Palawan. The Government provides a house and farming tools, and also subsistence and clothing until the colonist can support himself. Everything requisite is done to enable normal social relations to be maintained among the colonists and their families. Great attention is paid to religious activities and the education of the children. The number of attempted escapes each year has only been one in a thousand.

There are two other open institutions, at Dawan and Sablayan. Forty-eight per cent, nearly one-half of the 14,000 prisoners in the Philippines are in open institutions.

Four agricultural colleges called "Edcor" are maintained for communist dissident

rebels ("huks") who have surrendered to the Government. Each is given eight hectares of land and the necessary equipment to be paid for by instalments.

Among the innovations in the new Criminal Code drafted by the permanent Code Commission is a provision that every fine must be based on the offender's daily wage - which seemed fairer than imposing a uniform fine on rich and poor. Fines collected in this way by the Treasury will be used to assist released prisoners and prisoners' families. The draft Code punishes incitement to war and confers jurisdiction over war crimes on the Philippine civil courts, not on international tribunals such as those which tried the war criminals at Nuremberg and Tokyo.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m. and the Congress divided into sections.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at CJSmithphd@comcast.net or Emil Wandzilak at emil.wandzilak@unodc.org.