



"NAUGHTY!"

OUTLOOK

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➤➤ Trend of the Week ◀◀

➤➤ *Wickersham Report, No. 4*

WHEN the Wickersham commission, now out of official existence, bobbed up with its third report since the celebrated one on prohibition, the country paid little heed. The first of the three found crime statistics incomplete, inaccurate and untrustworthy and recommended that the federal government and the individual states gather them more carefully and systematically. The second report, on prosecution, found an undesirable link between politics and prosecutors' offices and recommended that it be broken. The third is devoted to federal treatment of child delinquents. In it the commission finds that the federal government, both in courts and prisons, is tragically behind most states in handling cases involving child delinquents and recommends the transfer of such cases to state and local jurisdiction. Offenses against the prohibition law were responsible, the report shows, for about half of the federal sentences.

Like its two predecessors, the third minor report is mainly a statement of the obvious. Not that obvious reports are necessarily worthless; their value is largely dependent upon the prestige of those who make them. The last three reports of the Wickersham commission might have commanded wide attention and stimulated immediate remedial action had the commission been careful of its reputation. The commission, however, threw its prestige to the winds in January when it returned a prohibition report whose wet findings were capped with dry recommendations. The reason why it is getting little credit for saying the obvious about minor problems

is that it refused to say the obvious about the major problem of prohibition. The commission's history has become merely a sad story of what might have been.

➤➤ *Federal Fact-Juggling*

THERE HAS BEEN so much juggling of official figures in Washington that Ray O. Hall's charges concerning the recent report on the "Balance of International Payments" should at least be accorded a hearing. This is the document which President Hoover so generously christened "the most important single communication in the entire field of any country's international economic relations." It was largely prepared by Mr. Hall, an expert in the Commerce Department's Bureau of Finance and Investment, and was credited to him in the text. It transpires, however, that Mr. Hall does not want the credit but does want the public to know that his manuscript was "so altered in the editing as to falsify figures and also to suppress vital truths discovered during my investigation."

American imports provide a case in point. Mr. Hall contends that the customs statistics overvalued the 1930 imports by \$175,000,000, that he attempted to make the correction and that he was dismissed from the Department when he refused to sign the report suppressing it. He points to other mangling, a conspicuous instance being the deletion of his statement that, in the tremendous increase in our tourist traffic to Canada, "the importance of prohibition in the United States will be doubted by nobody." He declares that the conscientious labors of governmental experts "are being set to naught to protect ex-

pediency, often by shallow and frivolous conceptions of expediency."

Here we have a truth, whatever the merit of Mr. Hall's specific charges. There is a link between politics and fact-finding in Washington, which, obviously, should be cut asunder. As facts—intricate economic and financial facts—become of more and more importance in determining and measuring political policies, the cutting of this link becomes more and more imperative. The nation will owe much to the man or group of men eventually performing the operation.

➤➤ *Slapping at the Shorts*

PRESIDENT HOOVER, having scored abroad with his moratorium, tries a trick on the home field and fumbles pathetically. That, in essence, is the story of his July 10 attack on speculators who, says he, "are selling short in our commodity markets, particularly in wheat." Mr. Hoover maintains that this activity has but one purpose, "to depress prices," that it "tends to destroy returning public confidence" and "deprives many farmers of their rightful income." Hence, in the name of patriotism, he desires that "these gentlemen" desist.

How feeble this manoeuvre seems when stacked up against the facts. The principal facts are that the Hoover farm relief policy—the \$500,000,000 Federal Farm Board policy—has failed, that prices of agricultural products are down in the cellar, that the farmers are down in the mouth and that the Administration is in dire need of a scapegoat. So the White House finger points at the short-sellers, the bear-raiders, the bogey-men of American trading who,