

committing their first offence. Perhaps the one factor which they share is that over the years they have become lonely social derelicts. It is now recognised that detention in custody for a long period is not an effective way of dealing with such people. We shall look forward with interest to the development of the new prison at Blundeston, catering for recidivists of inadequate personality.

Of these three reports Dr. West's \*book is especially recommended to the general reader who wants to learn about the kind of people who have become recidivists and he provides some stimulating suggestions as to how these people might be dealt with.

*The Habitual Criminal\**  
Cambridge Study in Criminology  
Macmillan. 25s. 0d.

## Institute for Social Research

THE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH has as its primary function to sponsor and engage in both theoretical and practical research of sociological interest. This involves carrying out surveys, either qualitative or quantitative, and also setting up experimental projects. The Institute also undertakes some work of a commercial nature.

The Institute has been engaged, for the past year, on a community study project designed to isolate and analyse special problems which confront people living in newly developed areas. The location of the project is a housing estate in South East London.

An intensive Medico-social Survey involved fairly lengthy interviews, mainly with housewives, who were also asked to keep weekly diaries recording their day-to-day activities. The questionnaires used were designed to reveal any problem of estate life and their effect on the mental and physical health of the housewife. Similar interviews were employed with smaller samples of old people and teenagers.

In the Community Activation Program housewives were encouraged to come to the project H.Q. and a number of groups were formed. These were mainly for social and recreational activities, but they also had therapeutic side effects. Members were encouraged to take over the organisation of the groups, and at the same time were brought to see the processes and value of community development, so that they might take a more active part in the life of the community. They would also be responsible for a number of social services: for example, Old People's Luncheon Club, Day Nursery, and friendly visiting of the home-bound. It is hoped that the creation of reference groups in this way will have the effect of reducing the frequency of psychological and social disorders and "Estate Malaise".

In addition, the project grew and became involved in a certain amount of case work which led to the incorporation of action-survey techniques in the overall project. For this aspect of the work a qualified social worker was employed.

Such "commercial" work as is undertaken by the Institute is that which is commissioned by industry (both management and labour), publishing houses, radio and television, local authorities, statutory and voluntary organisations.

Conferences and Seminars for discussion and comparison of current work are organised from time to time by the Institute. In June there was a conference in London, the theme of which was "Special Problems in the Treatment of Family Disorders." Among the speakers were: Dr. J. G. Howells, Director of the Department of Family Psychiatry, Ipswich, and Dr. Derek Miller, of the Tavistock Clinic.