

# The Atlanta Journal

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EDITORIALS

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cent; and larceny of \$50 or more, up 15.5 per cent.

Just why the number of forcible rape cases went down is not readily explainable. But the reason the number of auto thefts went down is obviously related to Georgia's stricter laws involving automobile records.

This is significant because those measures show that adequate laws help bring about a decrease in crime.

In view of the downward trend in auto theft it is logical to assume that the advice of J. Edgar Hoover in regard to murder and homicide should be heeded.

In the recently published statistical report Mr. Hoover again pointed to "the need for adequate firearms legislation." He said six of every 10 murders were committed with the use of a firearm.

It would appear that firearms laws as good as present auto theft laws would reduce the high homicide and manslaughter rate.

But just how long it will be before legislative bodies here and elsewhere in the United States become so convinced of that possibility that they actually pass firearms legislation is anybody's guess.

## Elections in Fulton

FULTON countians, who were the victims of muddling confusion when they cast their ballots in 1966, have reason to look expectantly toward the legislature's creation of an elections board for the county.

Confusion, inconsistency and almost unbelievable errors prevailed in the official handling of the past year's balloting in Fulton.

There was confusion about how to count Votomatic ballots that were marked less than perfectly. There were inconsistencies from precinct to precinct in managing the election. Finally, there was an extraordinary episode when the legislature was counting the write-in ballots and found no acceptable, official write-in returns from Fulton, resulting in no official count of them. Upwards of 80,000 write-in votes thus were thrown out, almost casually, because election officials had made a technical mistake in failing to properly forward their returns to the Georgia secretary of state.

Fulton Rep. Grace Hamilton's successful bill to strip elections management from the Fulton ordinary's office and turn it over to a five-member elections board offers hope for improvement, if the board takes its job seriously.

The Fulton County Commission would name the chairman of the board, and there would be two representatives each from the Democratic and Republican parties. The arrival of the two-party system in Fulton is thus signaled officially.

There can be little excuse for incompetent handling of so important a public business. The voters have a right to expect better.