New Day Opens for Parole, A

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A NEW DAY OPENS FOR PAROLE

Winthrop D. Lane

Prison doors may swing open under one of two sets of conditions. An official may conduct the offender to the front door and say: "You have served your time. You have paid your price. The penalty exacted by society has been met. From now on we have no interest in you. This institution has done its best. If we have failed to make a man of you, that is your fault. We wish you well but, there being nothing further we can do, we wash our hands of the matter. Keep out of mischief—and here is ten dollars." The offender, with a suit of prison-made clothes on his back, walks off. He may or may not be met by friends. He may or may not know what to do. He may or may not have a job. Not infrequently the only thing he knows to do is to return to his old associates and to criminal ways.

The other set of conditions under which prison doors may swing open is this: "We have tried to make a man of you. If we have failed, we are sorry, but we have no intention of quitting the job now. We shall keep an interest in you—and not only shall we keep an interest in you but we shall do our level best to help you get on your feet, to live usefully within the law in your community. This means that you will be on parole. You will have a parole officer, who will be your friend. He will help you get a job. He will help to straighten out your family difficulties—and to be of assistance in all other ways possible. You are to feel free to call upon him; and he will often call upon you. You must observe the conditions of your parole, which have been explained to you. We may as well be frank with you and tell you that we are doing this for two reasons: first, in order that we may help you; and, second, in order that we may bring you back to the institution if you disappoint us. We have no intention of letting you commit additional crimes. Our supervision of you will be close and, so long as you permit it, friendly. It will become unfriendly only when you show evidence of going wrong. Now, go ahead, keep out of trouble, and make a man of yourself."

Obviously prison doors swing open under the second of these

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two conditions only in places where there is a parole system. Obviously, also, it is better for the offender, and more protective to society, to have a parole system than not to have one—provided the system functions in the manner just outlined. And yet parole has been violently attacked and repeatedly condemned. For this there are historical reasons and historical justifications.

Parole has been misunderstood. It has been badly administered. It has received too little financial support—and has degenerated into uses foreign to it. It has been regarded as clemency, as giving the offender a break, as letting him off easy, as a device for shortening an offender's term. Actually, where properly conceived and administered, it is none of these things—and yet the public still so regards it in the main. Parole is the safest way of releasing an offender from an institution. It is an extension of control beyond the walls of the prison or reformatory. When the state places a man on parole, it says: "We are not through with you." If the moment when a man enters an institution is important, so is the moment when he leaves. Then it is that he comes up against the hostility of society and may fall back again into law-violating ways. The time during which a person is on parole is a period of adjustment or transition from the extraordinary and artificial life of an institution to normal life in the community at large. It is a continuation of the process of treatment begun when the man enters the institution; and if the institution has done its part, the parole officer finds it easier to do his. Parole is not based on consideration for the offender; it is based on consideration for society. If a person on parole commits additional crimes, the question must immediately be asked: Would he have been more likely to commit them if he had not been on parole? And so long as the offender is on parole he can be returned to the institution whether he actually commits fresh crimes or not. That is the safeguard or big stick in the parole system.

Beginnings

I have been asked to discuss developments in the field of parole in the past twenty-five years. This is both a pleasant and an unpleasant task, for it means recording the failures of parole and it means recording recent successes. To begin with, it means making a brief reference to what may be called the legislative period in the history of parole. As many people know, recognition of the principle of parole first appeared in law in the act for the management of the
Elmira Reformatory, passed by the New York legislature in 1877. Parole thus arose with the establishment of the first reformatory and the passage of the first indeterminate sentence law.

For many years thereafter the history of parole was primarily a history of legislation. State after state, following the example of New York, passed some kind of law providing for the conditional release of prisoners before the expiration of their full sentences. Viewed in retrospect, these laws seem a miscellaneous and rather aimless lot. Their provisions varied widely; they varied in regard to such questions as who could be paroled, who was the paroling authority, what portion of the sentence must be served before parole, what kind of facts were to be used in deciding whether an offender was ready for parole, how long should the parole period continue, etc.

A number of states declared that second termers could not be paroled. Others said that third termers could not be paroled, and still others "old offenders." Some allowed life prisoners to be paroled, while others excluded them. The commission of particular offenses deprived persons of the opportunity to be paroled in some states, such as arson, selling of drugs, criminal syndicalism, rape, corruption in public office, etc. Meanwhile, there was great diversity also in answering the question: Who shall have power to place offenders on parole? Some states gave this power to the Governor, deeming it an exercise of executive clemency. Others bestowed it on existing boards of pardons. Still others left it to the board of managers or other authority of the institution in which the offender was confined. In some states it was given to boards of different kinds already heavily charged with other responsibilities, such as state boards of charities, boards of prison commissioners, boards of public welfare, etc. A number of states established special boards of parole exercising no public duties but that of deciding who should be released on parole; most of these boards served only part time and on many of them laymen were represented along with persons working in the field of penology.

Similar disagreement was displayed in regard to the time when a prisoner might become eligible for parole. One state said he could become eligible after he had served six months; another after he had served one year. Many states agreed that prisoners who had received both minimum and maximum sentences might become eligible for parole at the expiration of the minimum, but three states made parole at that time compulsory provided the prisoner had kept a good prison record. One state declared that parole could occur
when the offender had served a fourth of his minimum, another when he had served a half. Several states, so far as their reformatories were concerned, eliminated minimum sentences and said that parole could occur any time after admission to the institution. With respect to persons receiving definite sentences, a number of states said they could be paroled after serving one-half; others after serving two-thirds; still others after serving three-fourths. There was little uniformity of provision and no consensus of opinion concerning the purposes and nature of parole.²

By 1900 twenty states had passed some kind of law providing for parole. By 1910 the number had risen to thirty-three, and the Federal government had joined the group. The march went on, and by 1922 only four states lacked parole legislation of some kind. Today Virginia and Mississippi are the only states without such legislation.

*Aims*

It should not be inferred from the foregoing that the early advocates of parole—such men as Brockway, Sanborn, Dwight and E. C. Wines—did not have in mind a pretty clear picture of what their new reforms were to accomplish. Parole, as we have seen, arose with those two other distinctively American contributions to penology—the reformatory and the indeterminate sentence. The truth is that the advocates of these reforms had worked out a rather neat notion of what was to occur. In the first place, there were to be reformatories, which were to be different from prisons. The reformatory was to receive a younger and more hopeful class of offenders, and by a different method of treatment was to fit people for return to society. In the second place, judges were to send people to reformatories, not for definite lengths of time stated in advance, but on indeterminate sentences so that the proper authorities could decide when the offenders were fit to rejoin their fellows and could release them at that time. In the third place, such release was to be conditional; it was to be on parole. There was to be a period during which the offender's fitness to live with his fellows could be tested, with the provision that he could be brought back to the institution if he failed.

This was ingenious and certainly logical. The trouble was that it was perhaps ahead of its time. Reformatories did not find it so easy to accomplish the prodigies of reform that were expected; knowledge of human behavior, and of the personalities of criminals, had not progressed far enough to give them effective working tools, and so the reformatories hardly lived up to their part. Moreover, many reformatories fell into the hands of administrators who had been trained in the old prison school, and they were not suited to the new job. So far as the indeterminate sentence was concerned, that, of course, was merely a tool; it could do nothing by itself. And parole fell by the board because almost nowhere was any serious attempt made to give it real operation.

In the first place, parole authorities looked at the nature of the individual's offense, and if that particular crime happened to be especially disturbing or shocking to them, they said he couldn't be paroled. Instead of being influenced by a general picture of his conduct, personality and circumstances, they paid attention to small items, such as whether he was impertinent to guards, the number of disciplinary "marks" against him in the institution, etc. Again, it was a current practice to consult the judge who had sentenced him and the prosecutor who had tried him, asking their opinions, as if they knew anything about the matter or could be expected, from their brief acquaintance so long before, to give dependable advice concerning his suitability for parole.

A greater error crept in, however. Parole degenerated into a tool, used by the institutions, to make better prisoners rather than better residents of the community. The promise of early release, i.e., release on parole, was used to obtain good conduct from inmates while they were still in the institution—and this contributed to ease of administration by the warden or superintendent. Thus, by becoming a reward for good conduct, parole lost its original character of being a testing period for life in the community, and sank into something the institution could grant or withhold according as the individual offender proved amenable to discipline and gave no trouble. But a good prisoner is not necessarily a good resident. Men and women become institution wise; they learn how to obey rules, and the rules of many institutions are minute and hard to obey; what is more, they learn how to curry favor. Thus parole, where practice became worst, was largely a bestowal of favors—and the prisoners who were the most fit to be released were not the ones released on parole. Moreover, other abuses crept in. In some places politics
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interfered, and paroles were granted because local politicians asked for the release of particular offenders. Overcrowded institutions used parole as a means of diminishing their populations.

In this way, emphasis was shifted very largely from the *supervision of offenders while on parole* to *release on parole*. The public came to regard parole as a means of shortening an offender's term. All it saw was the action of the parole authority in permitting a person to leave the institution—and if that person was presently picked up for another crime, naturally the public concluded that his earlier release was an error. If it did not have its mind on supervision, because there was no supervision. It did not think of parole as a period of transition from the artificial life of the institution to normal life in society, as an extension of control over the offender, and therefore as an added social safeguard, because parole had not yet become so effective and dignified a thing.

*Inadequate Supervision*

Such attempts as were made at supervision and after treatment can be quickly described. In some jurisdictions there was frankly none. In others an offender was given a dozen blanks, for reports, and told to mail these in at the rate of one a month; when all had been received he was discharged from parole and nobody knew whether the statements made by him in these reports were true or not. Most states and institutions did have employees they called parole agents or officers. These were seldom selected because of their fitness to do real supervising work, but got their jobs, as so many prison clerks and guards got their jobs, because somebody knew them, the position was there, and it was not considered necessary to have a person with special qualifications.

Whether such officers were employed by the institution or by a central parole authority functioning for the whole state, there were almost never enough of them to do effective work. The number of persons on parole was too great for genuine assistance, guidance and supervision; the idea that the officers could actually assist the ex-prisoner to find work, or to straighten out his family difficulties or otherwise be of constructive help to him after he had left the institution, was usually a farce.

As a consequence, many officers merely sat at home or in the office waiting until they had heard that some parolee had violated his parole somewhere, and then they would go and get him. Will Colvin, speaking before the American Prison Association in 1919, said that
he had seen three officers from three different institutions in Illinois, all in Springfield on the same day, each calling upon a person paroled from the institution he represented; one officer, said Mr. Colvin, could have taken charge of all the parolees in Springfield or in Sangamon County. Yet, with too few officers, time was wasted in travel because the work was so poorly organized.  

An officer in the state of Washington resorted to the method of traveling from county to county. He would send notice in advance to all the parolees in the counties he was to visit. In this notice he would designate a time and place at which he would meet them. The parolees then journeyed to the county seat, met the officer, made their reports and went back home. He journeyed on to the next county. Never did he visit the homes of the parolees, never did he have time for real help, never did he really know what they were doing. Whether they told him the truth when they saw him he did not know. The officer for the Missouri State Reformatory followed a somewhat similar plan, spending three days each month in St. Louis interviewing 225 parolees.  

In 1917 the Morrow Inquiry found that one officer looked after more than 1,200 parolees from the New Jersey State Prison, two officers looked after nearly 700 from the Rahway Reformatory and three officers looked after 1,000 from the State Home for Boys.

"Throughout all the twenty-four years that a parole law has been in operation in Illinois," said Mr. Colvin in 1919, "after-care and supervision have been a farce and a joke." The parole system of New York State, said George W. Alger in a report to the Governor as late as 1926, "always has been . . . an underfinanced moral gesture." It has hardly been possible, wrote the Missouri Association for Criminal Justice in the same year, for "the parole officer to be more than a clerk of record and police officer who brings back to the institution such parole defaulters as can be apprehended in the communities visited."

To supplement this inadequate work, help was received from individuals and private organizations. It was a practice in some
places to ask individuals, called sponsors, to care for parolees and to do what they could to assist them to go straight and get on their feet; many devoted persons contributed their services to this effort. It was a practice, also, for the more conscientious parole officers to carry on a correspondence, by means of which they hoped to solicit the aid of, and obtain reports concerning the progress of parolees from, employers, pastors, friends and others interested. But the most organized and effective volunteer help came from agencies and societies accepting this responsibility as part of their regular activities. Among such organizations were the Central Howard Association of Chicago, the Prison Association of the City of New York, the Salvation Army and a large number of others, local and national in scope. In 1910 Amos W. Butler said that he knew of twenty-four organizations, having headquarters in twenty states, rendering such help to prisoners on parole or just out of institutions. Some of these confined their activities largely to material relief, such as food and clothing. Others tried to obtain work for ex-prisoners and to assist them in other ways. A number went by the name of prisoners' aid societies. It was a practice, when offenders left institutions, to assign them to organizations of the same religious faith as the offender himself—catholics to catholic organizations, protestants to protestant, and so forth. Much constructive criticism of current parole practice came from the observations and reports of these organizations.

In brief, this is an outline of some of the unpleasant developments in the field of parole. It would be gratifying to be able to say that this picture belongs wholly to the past. It does not. It is an accurate description of parole as practiced in most parts of the country today.

Improvement

But there have been demonstrations of much better methods. Parole, at last, has come into its own; the faith of the early advocates has been justified. Within the past fifteen or twenty years a number of institutions and states have established effective parole organizations, have increased the number of officers to a point nearly sufficient, have raised standards of supervision to a high level—and on the whole have set up a system and procedure that really takes offenders as they come from institutions and makes it possible for them to get along as well in society as they are capable of doing.

To the penologist this is a great triumph. It is a triumph

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of persistence over many obstacles, not the least of which is public skepticism and even hostility. No longer, in those jurisdictions where parole work has become effective, is the public justified in criticising parole because persons once let out of prison commit additional crimes. Everyone comes out of prison—except those who die there. The only questions are whether the person was let out at the proper time and whether, on the whole, the supervisory activities of the parole authorities are as competent as contemporaneous knowledge and practicable administrative procedure permit them to be.

It would be interesting to trace the influences that have produced more adequate parole procedure. Undoubtedly one of them is probation. When people saw that offenders who had not yet been sent to institutions, who had not progressed very far in their law-violating careers, could be handled with great success in the communities and responded to extra-mural or supervisory treatment, they concluded that the same type of treatment could be applied to those who had passed through institutions. Not that probation preceded parole. It did not; legislatively the two originated at almost the same time. But probation developed more rapidly than parole. Greater possibilities were seen in the young, inexperienced offender—the type usually placed on probation. Moreover, administration of probation fell into the hands of those who were dissatisfied with traditional points of view in penology, whereas parole was being administered in a more conservative spirit. Thus, there were earlier demonstrations of good probation work than of parole—and presently parole was imitating probation.

To this must be added the determined enthusiasm of many people, not only in the field of parole but in other branches of penology. In 1909 a committee appointed by the Civic Federation of Chicago declared that the parole system of Illinois could not be fairly judged until a sufficient number of officers was appointed. In 1910 the International Prison Congress met for the first time in the United States—and the American delegates were greatly elated to overcome the hitherto expressed opposition of the Congress to the indeterminate sentence and parole, and to see the Congress vote in favor of these two measures. In that same year the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology was founded, together with its Journal, and Committee C of the Institute began its memorable series of reports on parole by declaring that the same type of supervision was necessary in parole as in probation. In the next year Charles R. Henderson, eminent student of penology, wrote: "Just now perhaps the most vitally important requirement in our parole
system is the appointment of a larger number of parole officers." It is not pretended that these are either the earliest or the most significant expressions to this effect. They are selected merely as illustrations.

A strong influence also was exercised by women's reformatories. These institutions have been guides more than once in the field of penology. In 1914, when the American Prison Association met in St. Paul, Mrs. Jessie D. Hodder, superintendent of the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women, presented a "parole record" showing the kinds of information used at that institution in deciding whether a girl was suitable for parole, and also described the hearing and procedure preceding parole. It was evident that the information was painstakingly gathered and comprehensive, including a personal and family social history as well as a medical report, a study of the offender's attitudes, a list of delinquencies and a report on her progress in the institution; in other words, an effort was made to know just what kind of girl was being released and whether her chances of success were good or bad. In the discussion preceding parole various officers of the institution and others took part. This was one of the earliest best instances of thorough consideration being given to release on parole. Meanwhile, the supervision of these girls were also of a high quality, and five years later Edith N. Burleigh, superintendent of the Girls' Parole Department, Massachusetts Training Schools, speaking before the same organization, described the careful efforts of parole "visitors" in the field. It was evident that parole, so far as it related to girls released from Massachusetts institutions, had reached a notably high standard.

Other advances in organization and method may be quickly mentioned. In 1915 New York City, under state legislation, established a municipal Parole Commission. To the chairmanship of this Commission Mayor Mitchel called Katherine Bement Davis, who had been superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills and Commissioner of Correction of the city of New York. Miss Davis brought to her task a purpose to make parole effective in the lives of prisoners. Although the largest sum spent on parole in a single year by an entire state had, according to Robert H. Gault, not exceeded $20,000 two years previously,11 New York City appropriated $85,902 to its new commission in 1917. This permitted the employment of a chief parole officer, three senior parole officers, thirty-six parole officers and a large clerical staff. The

Commission began its work with an equipment exceeding that of most parole organizations theretofore.\(^{12}\)

In 1917 the Westchester County Penitentiary and Workhouse was opened in New York. At once the institution inaugurated a parole procedure that was an improvement on most of those that had gone before. Among the principles of this procedure were case work looking toward the rehabilitation of the entire families of the offenders, and preparation of the environment to which the offender was to go. Within a few months after it had opened the institution was able to report:

"We have rehabilitated nine different families which were hopelessly broken up, the children in institutions, the wife dependent or working, the husband and father in the penitentiary, the household furniture sold or pawned or in storage. In each of these nine cases the home has been completely reestablished, usually in an entirely new community, the children taken out of the institution, the husband and wife reconciled to one another, and the husband eager to support his family."\(^{13}\)

Illinois established a central Division of Pardons and Paroles in its new Department of Public Welfare in 1917. This replaced the "farce and joke" to which, as we have seen, Mr. Colvin referred. In 1919 the General Assembly appropriated $194,000 for the work of this Division. Twenty field workers were employed. The state was divided into twelve districts for the more effective supervision of parolees.\(^{14}\)

**New Interest Arises**

It was evident that a new interest in parole was arising. People were not content with the narrow, limited, cribbed and cabin'd type of parole then being practiced and wanted something more protective to society and more useful to the offender on parole. The Prison Association of New York presented the following three propositions as underlying proper parole practice in 1916:

"1. That the prisoner ordinarily arrives at a period in his imprisonment when further incarceration will be of less service to him and to the state as a reformatory measure than a like period passed in liberty under parole supervision.

"2. That in the determination of the proper time at which to admit the prisoner to parole, an exhaustive and painstaking study will be made of the individual case, in order that both the right of society to be pro-

\(^{14}\)Proceedings, American Prison Association, 1919, p. 511.
tected, and the right of the prisoner to rehabilitate himself, may be preserved.

"3. That the supervision of prisoners while on parole shall be conducted thoroughly, and with efficiency and sympathy."

Probably the best state-wide system begun at about that time and incorporating these principles was the one started in New Jersey. This has remained a leader among parole systems. In 1918 the new Department of Institutions and Agencies was established. One of its early purposes was to bring more individual attention to the re-education and training of persons in correctional and penal institutions. In order to do this, it established a procedure for the careful consideration of their personalities, assets and liabilities and for supplying, so far as improved institutions could, the treatment calculated to send them forth more useful and law-abiding residents. A close relationship was seen between institutional treatment and parole and it was believed that, from the moment an offender entered an institution, parole should be his objective and the institution should plan to prepare him for it.

Arrangements were made, therefore, for gathering rather full and complete information about each offender: a personal history before his coming to the institution, a history of court appearances and delinquencies, a study of his family relationships, together with examinations carried on at the institution; these examinations were made by the identification officer, the physician, the psychologist, the educational director, the industrial director, the psychiatrist and others. All of this information was made available to each person participating in the education and treatment of the offender.

Institutional Program

The next step was to devise an effective way in which this information could be made of actual use and an institutional program for the offender planned. At each institution a group was established under the name of a classification committee. Members of this committee were the more important members of the staff, those already mentioned with the addition of the superintendent, disciplinary officer and such others as logically belonged to it. The committee was much more than a classification committee. Its purpose was to plan the institutional life of the offender; in other words, it was a board of treatment, meeting frequently to consider the offender's case and to alter the program for him from time to time. A new

arrival was supposed to appear before it within a month after admission; meanwhile, each member of the committee had talked to the new arrival, had made a written report of his conclusions, and had read the conclusions of his colleagues. General discussion of the offender led to a clearer understanding of his peculiarities and needs than would otherwise be possible. Group judgments were rendered and all shared in the responsibility for decisions reached. Items in the institutional program of the offender so decided were: should he be transferred to another, more suitable, institution and if so, which one; at what kind of work should he be placed; did he require academic education; what degree of security seemed necessary, and where should he live; what were his needs in regard to recreation and sports; what medical treatment did he need; was there any indication of the need for mental treatment; in general, was he of the amenable sort, or would he be likely to give trouble in the institution. These and other questions were settled and, as stated, changes made from time to time.

Now, the important thing for our purposes is that this committee was the body that finally recommended the time at which each offender should be let out on parole. In other words, the decision was not reached solely by the superintendent, or by a lay board of managers influenced by the superintendent, or even by a central parole board going around from institution to institution and sitting on the cases of offenders whom they hardly knew. It was reached by the whole staff group of the institution, the group that had watched the offender's progress most closely, that had more information about him than anybody else and that had planned his program with parole in view from the start. Since sentences to all institutions except the state prison carry no minimum, the committee was free to recommend release at any time within the maximum period of his sentence. It is to be noticed, too, that this group included professional specialists such as the physician, psychologist and educational director, whose opinions were valuable in this connection and who might be expected to be freer from a merely custodial point of view than some other members of the committee. Legally, the board of managers had to ratify the recommendations of the classification committee, but in practice this was nearly always done. When Alfred E. Smith, then governor of New York, aroused tremendous interest in 1927 by suggesting that the power to fix sentences be taken away from judges and that time of release be determined by a "board, properly
constituted," he was suggesting substantially the arrangement that for some years had been in effect in New Jersey.

The committee acted also with knowledge of the home and environment into which the offender was going. The original home or social investigation, at the time the offender reached the institution, was made by a parole officer on the staff of the Division of Parole, also in the Department of Institutions and Agencies. Preceding release, a second home investigation was made, usually by the same officer; this gave the committee information as to whether the home was suitable or not, and if not arrangements were made for the offender to live elsewhere. In this way the Division of Parole became acquainted with the family and the offender before he came out, and was ready to receive him. Moreover, a representative of the Division sat at meetings of the classification committee when parole decisions were being reached and had a voice in the release of the offender.

Rehabilitation on Parole

Supervision was centralized in this Division of Parole. It was responsible for the oversight of all parolees from the correctional institutions of the state, with the single exception of the state prison which, owing to a constitutional provision, was prohibited from delegating care of its own offenders. The purpose of the Division of Parole was to apply the methods of social case work to the rehabilitation of persons on parole.

It early sought a high grade of parole officer, making this a civil service position, and in 1929 the state civil service commission established the following qualifications for the position:

"Education equivalent to that represented by graduates from colleges or universities of recognized standing; standard course in social service; two years' experience as social investigator, or education and experience as accepted as full equivalent by the Civil Service Commission. Knowledge of problems of delinquency, laws governing commitment, care and parole of delinquents, knowledge of approved methods of social case work, investigation ability, thoroughness, accuracy, tact, leadership, firmness, good address."

Size of the staff has grown and today the number of officers is twenty-four, eighteen of whom are men and six women. Women on parole are supervised exclusively by women officers and men by men. Two of the men officers are Negroes, their work being confined to colored parolees. The state is divided into territories, each officer living
in his own territory and in general supervising parolees in that neighborhood, though there is some specialization, such as the assignment of younger boys to particular officers, etc. The average case load per officer is somewhat higher than it ought to be, the desirable number being perhaps between fifty and seventy-five, but this is in part a result of the depression and recent inability to increase the staff.

The Advisory Committee of the Wickersham Commission, composed of twenty-four well-known penologists, declared in 1931 that the parole system of New Jersey could possibly lay claim to being the best parole system in the country "without being ruled out of court." In New Jersey, as in several other states where parole work has recently attained high standards, there is full acceptance of the idea that after-care of prisoners is a branch of social case work and that those who are employed in it ought to have the same abilities, use similar techniques, and strive for the same professional skill as case workers with family welfare societies. In Miss Cord's phrase, it is "case work with the punch of the law behind it." In so far as parole falls short of these requirements, it falls short of what leaders in parole work now expect of it. In New Jersey the family of the offender, not simply the single person on parole, is regarded as the proper client of the parole officer. Offenders are kept on parole until the expiration of their maximum sentences.

Meanwhile decided improvements were occurring in other states. Minnesota was employing better parole officers, was selecting prisoners for parole with greater care, was improving administration and demanding a higher type of supervision from her officers. Selection of prisoners to be paroled was placed in the hands of a central parole board. Massachusetts was also improving parole service, influenced to some extent, doubtless, by her excellent probation service; parole supervision was being made more effective for men, it having already reached high standards for women. California must also be included among the states improving her parole service in recent years.

The New York System

Probably the most astonishing single development in the field of parole in the past few years was the establishment in 1930 of an entirely new system in the state of New York. An understaffed division of parole had existed in the Department of Correction. The new law set up a division in the Executive Department. At the head
of this division is a board of three members, appointed by the Governor, receiving $12,000 a year each and giving full time to their work. This board has charge of releases on parole from the four state prisons and Elmira Reformatory. It, or one of its members, visits each of these institutions, considers the cases carefully on the basis of very full information, and decides whether or not the offender shall be paroled.

The board is charged also with the task of supervising persons on parole. For this purpose it has the largest staff and most fully equipped organization in the country at present. Appropriations for the year ending June 30, 1932, were $401,485. At the head of the organization is an executive director, receiving $9,000 a year. The staff includes a chief parole officer, three case supervisors, an employment director, a research director, 64 field parole officers, several social investigators and clerical and stenographic assistants. All of the employees of the board, except the executive director, are in the competitive class of the civil service. The state is districted and parole officers are assigned to specific localities through the state.

Under the law the executive director of this board is required to "formulate methods of investigation and supervision . . . and develop various processes in the technique of the case work . . . including interviewing, consultation of records, analysis of information, diagnosis, plan for treatment, correlation of effort by individuals and agencies, and methods of influencing human behavior." He is further instructed to imbue the staff with proper standards and ideals of work and to hold monthly staff meetings at which professional questions shall be discussed. He is also directed, with the approval of the board, to maintain at the central office a library "containing the leading books on parole and methods of influencing human conduct together with reports and other documents on correlated topics of criminology and social work." The two annual reports of this Division of Parole so far issued constitute perhaps the most illuminating discussions of parole technique yet published.

Here is recognition of parole work that would have warmed the hearts of the early advocates. It is the avowed purpose of the New York parole board to apply the technique of social case work in parole supervision. Although it has not been in existence very long, still the policies adopted, procedures established and staff selected all make clear that it is in perfect accord with the purposes of the law and is rapidly building up a superior parole service.
Federal Parole

In 1930 also the Federal government established a new Board of Parole in the Department of Justice. This has charge of releases and supervision for all Federal penal and correctional institutions. The board is composed of three members, appointed by the Attorney General, and serving at salaries of $7,500 each. The establishment of this board has meant the adoption of uniform policies and more effective parole procedure in regard to Federal prisoners. In addressing the task of providing adequate supervision, the board has been handicapped of course by the large territory and by the difficulty of recruiting a staff to supervise cases scattered over so wide a field. It has met this problem in part by calling upon the assistance of Federal probation officers and a number of other agencies. Despite these difficulties, its work, together with other improvements in the Federal prison service, has already resulted in helping to raise the morale of offenders in Federal institutions.

In Other States

Pennsylvania and Ohio have also recently extended and centralized their parole supervisory machinery. Eight states, according to Clair Wilcox in the Social Work Year Book for 1933, now have a substantial number of field agents performing parole supervision. These are California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. It is not to be understood that the parole work of all of these states is at present on the same basis of proficiency, nor is it to be understood that competent parole work is not done elsewhere. Particular institutions in various states have developed effective parole work. In the greater part of the country, however, parole work still lags far behind its possibilities and is carried on more or less in the fashion described in the earlier part of this review. It is to be expected, however, that rapid advances will presently occur in places not herein named.

Prognostic Methods

An extraordinary development in the field of theory remains to be mentioned. This is the effort that has been made to discover a prognostic method by which paroling authorities might predict with reasonable certainty the future history of offenders. It is contended that this would be of great use not only to paroling authorities but to judges in choosing the disposition of a case—whether probation, a
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reformatory, prison or some other treatment. Much research and mathematical computation has gone into the effort to discover such a device. First, students have tried to determine what factors, such as criminal record, family relationships, kind of neighborhood in which offender was brought up, work habits, mentality, disciplinary record in the institution, etc., bear the closest relation to success and failure on parole. Investigations of several groups of offenders have been made with this object in view. Having selected the most important factors, they then construct predictability tables by which, they contend, if an offender's "score" in relation to these factors can be determined, his chance of success or failure can be stated in terms of percentages. All that remains is for the paroling authority to investigate each offender and ascertain his score or rating in regard to the important factors. Thus, it becomes possible to predict that a particular offender has one-half a chance in ten to become a failure, another eight chances in ten to become a success, etc.

Hornell Hart appears to have been the first person to suggest the possibility of such an instrument. Other more important studies are those of E. W. Burgess, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, C. Tibbits, and G. B. Vold.

Obviously this is an alluring field of inquiry. When applied to parole, it must be remembered, however, that all offenders leaving correctional institutions ought to be released on parole. There ought to be no other method of discharge; this is for the purpose of assuring that every prisoner is under supervision for a period after release. If a prognostic device of the kind indicated can assist to determine the time at which an offender ought to be released, it will be helpful; otherwise, its practical usefulness is not clear. The discussion centering around these devices seems to assume that parole boards are engaged in the task of picking out, from persons in prisons, those who will be allowed to go out on parole and those who will never be allowed to go out that way. While it is true that the decisions of many parole boards seem to have this nature, this is unfortunate and ought to be discouraged; the better view is that parole

is desirable for all offenders. The ones not released on parole, therefore, would be those never released. Hence, a prognostic device that is intended to help in the selection of persons who will be released on parole is in reality a prognostic device for determining those who will be kept in prison all their lives and never released at all. Since the number of these is admittedly small—though it may, conceivably, of course, become larger—the practical use of such a device would be quite different from the use apparently intended by those who have been trying to devise it.

Another consideration to be borne in mind is that many of the factors used in these tables are factors relating to the pre-institutional life of the offender. In other words, his work habits before coming to the institution, his previous commitments, the kind of neighborhood in which he grew up, former family relationships, pre-institutional education and the like are all constants, and cannot be changed by anything happening to him in the institution or later. In so far as these factors affect the decision, Shall he be paroled? their answer is always the same. The only factors of value in determining the time at which he shall be paroled are those relating to his present and future. It appears, therefore, as if some of the studies to which we have referred were not based upon the type of information shedding light upon the real question: When is the offender most ready for parole?

It is suggested, also, that these devices may be of use to parole boards in determining whether a prisoner should be paroled for an indefinite period or for a short time. But the best test of that question is his behavior on parole. Is he adjusting satisfactorily in the community or is he not? If he is not, his parole should not end. If he is and his satisfactory adjustment has continued for some time, he may be considered for final discharge from parole. It would appear to be unwise to be too definite in advance about the length of time to be spent on parole. Devices of the kind we have been considering seem to give chief promise of usefulness where there is a choice of dispositions, as for example in the hands of a judge deciding whether to place an offender on probation, send him to a reformatory, to a prison or prescribe other treatment. The field of inquiry is fruitful and ought to be encouraged. Up to the present, so far as is known, no attempt has been made to apply such a device in practice.21

21For further discussion and critical analysis of these devices see “Testing the Work of the Prison” by C. E. Gehlke, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 157 (Sept., 1931), pp. 121-130.
Summary and Conclusion

This ends the historical review. It will now be interesting perhaps to sum up some of the more important conclusions about parole that have been reached by progressive leaders in the field today. The form of expression in the following paragraphs is the author's, but the opinions, it is believed, are rather widely shared:

1. All releases from correctional and penal institutions should be by parole. There should be no other method of release. As early as 1916 the Rev. William S. Beall, chaplain of the Maryland Penitentiary, told a section of the American Prison Association: "I believe every man ought to serve a part of his sentence on the outside." In 1928 Sanford Bates, addressing the Massachusetts Legislature, said: "We stand here today to make the statement that in the light of modern penology no man should ever be turned from prison directly into the community without the help, the safeguard and the protection of parole supervision." The same view is expressed in the report of the newly-established United States Board of Parole for the year ending June 30, 1932. The reason, as Mr. Bates makes clear, is that there ought to be a period of supervision for every offender leaving an institution. This is a protection to society as well as an assistance to the offender. Release at the end of a maximum sentence, with no supervision, should not be permitted.

2. Sentences should be indeterminate, certainly with at least minimums and maximums and real differences between the minimum and maximum, if not without either. The sentence without a minimum but with a maximum is a good form of sentence.

3. Consideration of an offender's release on parole should be a part of his treatment and should come up without question in the course of his institutional residence. The necessity of an "application" from the offender should be abolished.

4. The time spent on parole should be long enough to test the offender's fitness to live with his fellows. The best present-day practice is to continue this to the expiration of the maximum, or in the case of offenders from institutions for juveniles until they reach their majority. If satisfactory adjustment is made earlier, the offender can be given final discharge.

5. Meetings or conferences at which offenders are considered

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for parole should be private and confidential. The kind of "hearing" sometimes held, at which lawyers are allowed to make pleas, friends and others spectators allowed and even newspaper reporters permitted to be present, are intolerable and should be abolished.

6. Parole should be regarded as a continuation of the process of treatment begun in the institution. There should be a close relationship between the institution and its staff and the supervising agency and its staff. Fitting the offender for parole should be a conscious aim of the institution from the beginning.

7. Undoubtedly the present tendency in the United States is toward the establishment of central or state-wide boards of parole, with power to release offenders from several or all of the institutions of the state. For this there is a historical reason, since the control of releases by the institutions in the past has been poorly managed. As institutions become better, however, as the quality of their work with offenders improves and as they give more intelligent attention to individual prisoners, it becomes a question whether the staff of the institution is not, in the long run, the best informed and most competent paroling authority. The experience of New Jersey and of specific institutions in other states suggests that this may be the case.

8. The supervision of the offender is a branch of social case work. It should be conducted with the same thoroughness and standards as the work of family welfare societies. Admittedly, supervising agencies are dealing with a difficult class of clients, but this is no excuse for not making the best efforts. The object of the agency should be the fullest measure of rehabilitation permitted by the abilities of the offender. The parole officer should be regarded as a professional social case worker—and his client should be the family of the parolee and not merely the parolee himself.

These are the goals toward which parole work in the United States is moving.