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THE ORGANIZATION OF A PROBATION PROGRAM

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The organization of a probation program involves practically the same principles as are involved in a prison rehabilitation program. Where it differs, the difference is in degree. The aim is the same, namely, rehabilitation. Its success in achieving that aim, is more nearly assured since the probationer, unlike the prison inmate, bears little or no stigma, and has not been subjected to those processes of personal disorganization, which are the inevitable resultant of a prison experience. The Probationer is not an "ex con." He has not been prison conditioned.

The promise of success, inherent in the probation approach to the problem of the rehabilitation of the law breaker, carries with it the danger that the idea will be accepted too readily, and the hope will be cherished that the probation method will operate satisfactorily merely by virtue of its adoption. Such a hope is perilous. We have had enough experience with the probation method to know that a haphazard treatment of men placed on probation will fall down of its own weight. Furthermore, Probationers can not be intelligently and adequately handled en-masse, they must be treated not only as individuals but as persons. A generalized program will not do, for such will fail to meet the exigencies of particular situations.

It has become axiomatic among the more enlightened penologists that the punishment should fit the criminal rather than as Gilbert and Sullivan once suggested that "the punishment should fit the crime!" This enlightened philosophy should be incorporated into our Probation system just as the endeavor is being made to incorporate it into our penal system. In a measure, that is being done. The Classification System is, per se, an exemplification of that philosophy.

To that end it becomes necessary to develop certain fixed procedures, procedures that shall be in their very essence, objective. Just as we have developed scientific method in the detection of crime and the conviction of the criminal, so must we pursue scientific procedures in our efforts to rehabilitate the law breaker.

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The persons designated to formulate such procedures must of necessity be properly equipped and experienced in the gathering of social data and in the handling of statistical materials. The sentimental well-wisher cannot perform that task neither can it be performed by the equally sentimental, but sadistic type of law enforcement official. Such a person must be scientifically minded and trained, and socially experienced.

The trained and scientifically minded person will approach his problem with the definite hypothesis that a Probation Rehabilitation program involves a dual type of procedure, namely:

(A) Diagnosis.

(B) Treatment.

These two principles must be made fundamental in any working program.

(A) DIAGNOSIS.

1. The Probationer.

(a) Case History

The secret of adequate treatment lies here. The probation officer must "know his man." Hence, the need for a careful and detailed "case history." Such a Case History will embrace:

(1) Criminal History.

(a) Criminal Record.

A detailed report of past offenses, or such asocial conduct which has brought him to the attention of law enforcement officers in the past.

(b) Current Offense.

A digest of the offense and record of events leading up to the act, for which the Probationer has been arraigned in court.

(c) Elements in Trial.

A report setting forth whatever mitigating circumstances are involved in the offense and what factors determined the Judge to designate Probation rather than Prison.

Such Case History will also include

(2) Social History.

The Social History should cover all the significant elements and conditioning factors which have entered into the making of the Probationer's life. The

purpose of this is to discover if possible the major crime determinants.

Within a properly compiled Social History will be found a record of the combinations of conditioning factors or the various fortuitous circumstances, which have operated to bring about asocial conduct or anti-social activities.

An adequate Case History should cover the following categories:

- (a) Family data.
- (b) Educational History and Status.
- (c) Medical and Psycho-neurological History.
- (d) Occupational History and Vocational Skills.

(a) Family data.

The nature of the home in which Probationer was reared; the number of siblings and significant material concerning them; the relationship of parents to each other and to the children. It should make clear the economic and social level of the family and the reputation it has built up within the communities in which residence has been established. It is important to know whether the family has been transient or stable in its economic and social relationships.

It will also be a matter of importance to have recorded the history of the family in connection with the law enforcement and social welfare agencies. The social habits and activities of the members of the family group should not be overlooked. It is as important as the personal history of the Probationer. The family record is not an incidental matter.

A painstaking compilation of the data involved in the succeeding categories of his social history is of vital significance.

(b) Educational History and Status.

This may be determined by proper inquiry relative to school advantages and record. Present educational status should be secured through the medium of Standard Educational Achievement tests. These should be a matter

record. This data may serve as a means of encouraging further educational effort on the part of the Probationer.

(c) Medical and Psychiatric History.

This involves not only a record of the Probationer's history, but also of present status. It should point out pathological problems and recommend treatments. Some standard intelligence test should be given in this connection and it should indicate psycho-neurotic findings with recommendations for treatment where needed. If Probationer is found to be a psychopathic personality the report should be specific concerning manifestations and episodes.

(d) Occupational History and Vocational Skills.

Since it is necessary for complete rehabilitation that the Probationer shall pursue a gainful occupation, in which he will be both content and successful, it will be necessary to know what he has done and what he is capable of doing. It will be well, therefore, to have a report from previous employers setting forth the experience, skills, work, and personal habits of the probationer. The report should indicate what technical trade training he has had and to what extent he is further trainable. Vocational Aptitudes should be tested. These will serve as invaluable guides to the selection of an occupation for the Probationer. Placement in such occupation should depend largely upon results of this record and tests.

(3) Community Data.

Since community life is a factor in delinquency it is important to have pertinent facts concerning the community where the Probationer must live and work. This community data should cover:

(a) Economic and Social Analysis.

It should set forth the economic resources of the community. This would serve as a guide to placement of any or all probationers. It should also include:

(b) Register of Community Organizations.

These will be useful auxiliaries in helping re-integrate probationer into the social and economic life of the community.

(c) Important Persons in the Community.

These will serve to function as sponsors and as avenues to employment. Without such contacts, placement of men in jobs will be difficult.

(B) TREATMENT.

The treatment of a Probationer should of necessity envisage an increasingly relaxed supervision. The goal of this treatment should be a proper integration of the Probationer into the life of the community. This involves a procedure that will tend to remove all obstacles within the situation that might prevent that proper normal integration. It will be concerned with the Probationer's personality problems, as well as the economic hazards, which imperil him. These problems are not to be lightly regarded.

The events, which led to a violation of law in the first place, will have considerable bearing on the situation. The arrest, trial, and imprisonment with the attendant publicity and humiliations will unquestionably have provoked certain psychological effects within the individual. These things leave their stigmata. There will be a real problem involved in overcoming the effects of such stigmata. Hence, certain psychiatric treatment and direction will be inevitable in a well-set up program.

In a well-integrated treatment program, there should be provided some definite means for re-training and re-education. Such re-training and re-education should involve the building up of educational efficiencies.

Formal school work is carried on in evening classes through the medium of the Y. M. C. A., and similar character building organizations supported by community funds, in many cities and towns. The boards of education also maintain Opportunity Schools, many of which operate on evening schedules. Full advantage of these opportunities should be taken.

Re-training and re-education need not and ought not to be limited to the formal education procedures. Nor should such be limited merely to vocational or manual training. In a

limited number of cases, formal academic training and vocational training will be found to be badly needed but the real problem does not lie in that field.

Delinquent men need most a re-training for living, rather than for earning a livelihood. Investigation has shown the writer that prison inmates in the Federal Penitentiary rank little below, if at all below, the general population in formal education or in trade and occupational skills.

Tests conducted by the writer, covering five hundred inmates at McNeils' Island, Federal Penitentiary, indicated the following ratings:

Illiterates	5.66	8th Grade	12.0
1st to 4th Grade.....	4.0	9th Grade	10.4
4th Grade	6.6	10th Grade	12.0
5th Grade	4.6	11th Grade	10.2
6th Grade	8.6	12th Grade	7.0
7th Grade	10.8	College Experience	8.2

These ratings indicate ability to pass tests of the stated grades. We find many men with little school experience who are able to pass relatively high tests. On the other hand, we find some men of high school and college experience (their own statements), who can do little higher than seventh grade work. The difficulty of establishing valid norms for comparison will be appreciated by anyone who understands the problems of educational ratings. It should be kept in mind that these ratings are relative.

The re-training and re-educational program then should envisage much more than the formalities of an educational system. It should involve cultural training and the development of higher concepts of the responsibilities and ideals of citizenship. Training in leisure time activities should be given. Direction should be given towards the promotion of hobbies, and their development. This latter is important since it would appear that so many men get into trouble with the law largely because they are lacking in personal resources. They do not know what to do with leisure time. All men are striving to achieve status. There is no better avenue to status than a well-organized program of leisure time activities. Night schools are usually equipped to carry out such a program. Where they are not, such equipment, as they have, could be easily adapted to pro-

mote such activity. The Mechanics Institutes of England and the Cooper Union of New York present examples of what might be done throughout the country. In any event, the present educational resources of the community can be used, without additional expense for the re-training and re-education of the Probationer.

The fact is realized that there are definite limitations to such a program. It is a difficult matter to make the ideal program a reality but the goal can be set and the course established.

It will be necessary to secure the proper type of occupations in which the Probationer can maintain himself at a normal economic level, where he will not "lose face" with himself and his associates.

This is important. Rehabilitation depends so much upon one's ability to maintain one's self-respect. Social and economic status plays a significant part in this. If a man can be led to recover this self-respect and achieve a higher status, everything else being equal, his chances for making good on probation have been greatly enhanced.

The Organization Set-up.

The Probation officer can not properly carry out such a program alone. Within the jurisdiction of the Court there should be set up some functioning committees. The writer envisions a type of classification committee, which shall function in the interests of Probationers as such a committee functions within the Federal Prisons. The logic is that since such a program works well "after the fact" it might well be expected to function efficiently "before the fact."

Such a committee need not necessarily represent a salaried group. There are public minded citizens, well-equipped by training, temperament and experience, who would gladly serve the community in such a capacity, without pay. The routine work of such a committee could be handled by the paid staff in the Probation Officers' office. This committee might consist of:

1. The Judge who presided at the particular trial.
2. The District Attorney or his representative.
3. The Probation Officer.
4. A Psychologist, Psychiatrist or Medical Officer of the Public Health Service.

5. A Representative Citizen, preferably one with social vision with experience as business man or industrialist.

With such a set-up and with adequate data the program of the rehabilitation of the Probationer can be effectively carried out.

The major weakness of our Probation practice, at present, is that we have left too much to chance. Generally, the practice has been to turn a man loose with a warning, require him to make certain reports, restrict his movements and initiative and leave him to sink or swim. Too often, he sinks and finds his probation violated, and he is committed to prison. With an adequate probation program, the necessity for sending many men to prison diminishes.

Prison life inevitably conditions men towards further anti-social behavior. It represents an abnormal social situation and as such it unfits a man for living in a normal social environment. Few men, after being prison conditioned can make a normal re-adjustment in an organized society.

The problem is not merely that of overcoming the stigma of having done time. It involves consideration of the fact of what prison does to and within a man.

Furthermore, a prison though to some extent necessary is an expensive and inefficient social luxury. Society cannot afford them; yet, we are building larger, if not better, prisons. Many men are now confined within prison walls, needlessly, and society would be just as well, if not better served, if they were outside. With a great many men, the humiliation of the trial is a sufficient deterrent to further criminal activity without the added humiliation of a prison experience. Such men could be easily salvaged for society and their families with a saving of expense to society, if a well-planned probation program were put into operation.

The writer expresses these convictions after six years' experience in the prison service. These convictions have grown, not out of sympathy and sentiment, but out of observation and from the gathering of data. He has in the last six years made intimate contact with over five thousand prisoners. Out of that, the conviction has grown, that an intelligent probation system would render unnecessary the incarceration of a great proportion of convicted men.