

Spring 1941

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Recommended Citation

Harvey L. Long, A Proposed Rating Scale for Measuring Parolee Adjustment, 31 *Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology* 693 (1940-1941)

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A PROPOSED RATING SCALE FOR MEASURING PAROLEE ADJUSTMENT

Harvey L. Long¹

(The following proposal by Harvey L. Long, M.A., J.D., is scheduled for discussion at the coming Conference on Parole in Milwaukee. We are publishing it here to facilitate reference to it in the Conference and because of its intrinsic worth as suggesting a method for meeting a great need in dealing with each individual parolee.—Ed.)

Planning the parole program for a given parolee is generally accomplished over the conference table, the field worker and his supervisor cooperating in this essential preliminary task. Measuring the progress a parolee makes in achieving the planned objectives is a problem involved in all of the tasks of the field worker. Very little if any research or attention has been given to this important phase of the Parole Agent's function.

How can the field worker be assisted in keeping the goals of parole supervision in mind and at the same time achieve greater consistency and objectivity in measuring parolee progress?

The Central States Probation and Parole Conference Meeting in Chicago, in 1940, had this problem in mind when the following resolution was passed:

"WHEREAS, advances along scientific and professional lines cannot take place without scientific research, and

WHEREAS, we have no such body of research relating to Parole Board Hearings, Supervisory practice or case histories in the field of parole, and probation;

BE IT RESOLVED: that at the 1941 meeting each of the member states fur-

nish four sample case histories of the type developed in that state, for purposes of an exhibit, and further that the program committee arrange for definite meetings for the purpose of discussing acceptable techniques and practices."

The 1941 meeting of this Organization (May 5-8, 1941, Milwaukee) will give attention to the problems mentioned in the resolution through a joint meeting of related committees under the Chairmanship of Mr. T. P. Sullivan, Supt. of Supervision of Parolees, in Illinois.

The following proposed Rating Scale will be presented to the joint meeting for part of the discussion.

Credit is given to the Preston School of Industry (California) for suggestions taken from a report blank used by their field workers in reporting on visits with parolees.

Acknowledgment is given also to "Rating Teachers' Personal Effectiveness" by Bernice Baxter, Director of Instruction for Elementary and Junior High Schools, Oakland, California (The Journal of the National Education Association, Vol. 27, No. 3, March, 1938, p. 81).

Following Miss Baxter's suggestions, I have attempted to make this proposed Rating Scale a measure of parolee reactions rather than of mere description of qualities. To paraphrase Miss

Baxter, such a scale should be constructed to focus attention upon conditions which contribute to the mental and emotional well being of parolees, and to afford a means of recording observable evidence of the way in which parolees react to their whole environment including the Supervising Officer.

It is obvious that the Officer must be alert to all of these factors if he is to rate the parolee intelligently.

This particular device would simplify visitation reporting either by supplanting the usual report or by supplementing it.

The numerical representation of parole achievement, which the scale makes possible, should be of value in measuring progress. However, the results obtained from this numerical measure should not be considered alone and without regard to the total record.

With conscientious use by a trained and objective observer, such a rating scale as this should accomplish or provide three things:

1. A valuable supplementary measure of parolee adjustment expressed in terms of numerical standard.
2. A conduct standard for the parolee who is aware of items in the Rating Scale.
3. A consistent inquiry into and check of the essential factors in the parolee's program.

In this proposed scale the present assigned values and ranking of characteristics, attitudes, etc., are purely arbitrary. Suggestions which may come from those who use such a scale are invited.

PROPOSED PAROLEE RATING SCALE

(Place circle around "score" and under-score words applicable)

General Conduct

Maximum Value (20 points)

- 20—Satisfactory; good habits; neat; observes rules; willing.
- 15—Making progress toward satisfactory conduct.
- 10—Disagreeable at home; argues; making little or no progress.
- 5—Deceives; falsifies; profanes.
- 0—Disregards parole rules.

Employment

Maximum Value (20 points)

- 20—Regularly employed, sticks to job or making adequate effort.
- 15—Irregular or dissatisfied.
- 10—Odd jobs and occasional labor.
- 5—Changeable, unsatisfactory, discharged from work for cause.
- 0—Refuses to work, or makes no effort, shiftless.

Violations

Maximum Value (20 points)

- 20—No complaint of any kind.
- 15—Minor complaints.
- 10—Frequents undesirable places and or bad associates.
- 5—Gambling, drinking, disorderly.
- 0—Arrested for good cause or whereabouts unknown.

Savings and Investments

Maximum Value (10 points)

- 10—Regular and Systematic when possible.
- 7—Occasional, then withdrawn; buys wisely.
- 5—Buys things not needed.
- 2—Spends recklessly.
- 0—In debt unnecessarily.

Attitude

Maximum Value (10 points)

- 10—Willing, adaptable, cooperative.
- 7—Obedient.
- 5—Disobedient, argues.
- 2—Exaggerates.
- 0—Obstinate, headstrong.

Temperament

Maximum Value (5 points)

- 5—Ambitious.
- 4—Enthusiastic.
- 3—Visionary—listless.
- 2—Moody—restless.
- 0—Selfish.

Disposition

Maximum Value (5 points)

- 5—Agreeable; good natured; trust-worthy.
- 4—Obliging.
- 3—Disagreeable; bad temper.
- 2—Egotistical, self centered.
- 0—Spiteful; cannot be trusted.

Self Reliance

Maximum Value (5 points)

- 5—Has initiative; suggests ways and means of solving problems; has sense of own responsibility.
- 4—Accepts responsibility in terms of Agent's suggestions.
- 3—Over-anxious about results; constantly referring to Agent.

- 2—Relies on Agent; little ability to think for self; dependent.
- 0—Assumes no responsibility.

Reports

Maximum Value (5 points)

- 5—Always on time, complete and satisfactory.
- 4—On time but incomplete.
- 3—Complete but frequently late.
- 2—Reports when notified.
- 0—Ignores reports.

SCORE

—Total of encircled ratings.

(While a score of over 70 indicates reasonably satisfactory adjustment—marked fluctuations from former scores are particularly significant and indicate that the Agent should review the parole plan and case history in light of the cause for score fluctuation. The goal should be for a gradual improvement in the score.)

Name	Institution and Number	Address	Score
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CURRENT NOTE

Prisoners For National Defense—In February, 1941, the Prison Association of New York submitted its annual report and recommendations to the State Legislature, E. O. Halter, President, and E. R. Cass, General Secretary. The first item in the report dealt with the use of idle man-power in correctional institutions for national defense.

It was urged that the Legislature record itself with the proper State and National authorities as approving the use of idle man-power in correctional institutions as an aid to the National Defense Program. To this end the Legislature was urged to explore the full possibilities of such labor. The following comment was made:

“There need be no discussion as to the need for a National Defense Program, and it is generally conceded that skilled labor and equipment are in demand. This being

so, the Association is of the opinion that, so far as practicable, the potential man-power in correctional institutions be utilized as an aid to national defense.

“The one great contemporary problem of prison administration is that of prison labor. Federal and State legislation restricts operations almost to a nullifying minimum. Hundreds of prisoners are employed on what might be termed ‘made work,’ but they are otherwise not directing their talent and ability to the greater welfare and safety of the people of the State.

“The Governor of the State of New York has, from time to time, manifested a deep concern over the problem of defense preparations, and it would therefore seem that the possibilities of using this potential man-power should be fully explored.”