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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by

Richard L. Holcomb*

A FORWARD LOOK IN POLICE EDUCATION. By *Thomas M. Frost*. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1959. Pp. 290, illus. 64. \$8.75.

This is a difficult book to review. In the first place, it is hard to see just who it is intended for. There is considerable material pointed at the highest policy levels, and then again, detailed instructions for making up a simple outline are given. Then too, the sections on police education are generally limited to recruit training in a formal course with almost no attention to other methods of recruit training, such as field training with an older officer as used in Wichita for many years using the Explained, Demonstrated, and Performed method. Police training by Universities both pre-service and in-service is dismissed in a few words. Some very useful methods, such as the roll-call trained that has been so well developed by Los Angeles is not mentioned at all except in a list of suggested readings. So actually, this is not so much a forward look in police education as a rather spotty treatment of recruit training in a large department. I am also somewhat confused by the ninety pages, or over a third of the text, being devoted to selection of police officers. This subject is important, and it is closely related to training, but these pages might have better been devoted to police education and so have been able to develop this topic more completely.

This first paragraph sounds highly critical, and it is. But at the same time, there are many good things in this book, and by and large it is well done. Some specific areas are better explored than they have been to date. For example, there is considerable good material on developing training subject matter by job analysis. The fault is that these

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methods show only one way of selecting subjects to teach. Nothing is said about the relative time to spend on each subject. This section gives a strong impression that this is about the only way to do it. I do not believe that it is. Los Angeles used a very satisfactory approach for their Daily Training Guide. Basically, they found the problems the officers were having in the field, the points where the men thought they needed help or where their activities or reports showed they needed help, and then built their training around this. Now, this would not in itself develop a recruit training program, but it would show where the present recruit program needed strengthening. In the section on developing subject matter by community analysis, the author sounds more like a sociologist than a policeman. I am not sure how well the two positions can be integrated. Much sociological theory is a long way from police work, and I am not convinced that it is in advance of the better police approaches.

The two chapters on selection are not much of a contribution. Some of the material is incorrect. For example, the "O'Rourke Police Aptitude Test" is mentioned as an outstanding test. This test never did measure police aptitude. At best it was a poor test of reading comprehension, and it has been discarded by almost anyone who has used it. Similarly, the "Policeman's Mental Abilities Test" is actually an intelligence test where you add 10 policemen and 6 policemen instead of 10 apples and 6 apples. It is a fair intelligence test, but certainly not a police aptitude test, except as intelligence is a part of police aptitude.

In spite of these adverse criticisms, I think that this book is well worth reading. The author has done a good job in most of the book, and an excellent one in some sections. I am sure that future editions will be greatly improved.

RICHARD L. HOLCOMB