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PERSONNEL

SELECTION AND TRAINING OF
PRISON OFFICERS IN NEW ZEALAND

by Samuel T. Barnett,
Secretary for Justice,
Department of Justice of New Zealand, Wellington



UNITED NATIONS

077

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I. Selection of candidates

The applicant is interviewed generally as the result of advertisements in the press or personal enquiry by the superintendent and staff training officer who submit their recommendations to the Secretary for Justice.

The salient qualifications required are:

- (a) integrity;
- (b) a well balanced personality;
- (c) a good employment history and a record of being a law-abiding citizen as well as experience in the armed forces;
- (d) a sound physique and attitude; and
- (e) a good education.

An important observation to be made by the interviewing officers is whether the applicant has the sincerity and the earnest desire to make for himself a career in the service, or whether he is only seeking a job.

2. Initial training

Staff training officers (experienced officers from the prison staffs) are appointed in all institutions and their responsibilities cover:

- (a) the induction of all appointees;
- (b) the introduction of appointees to custodial procedures and regulations; and
- (c) the job rotation of appointees for progressive experience in all phases of their work and "on-the-job" training.

Statements of fact in this report are the responsibility of the author, and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of organs or Members of the United Nations.

In accordance with the tradition of past Congresses, it has been possible to secure the co-operation of certain national prison administrations for the printing of documentation for the First United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, which is from an historical point of view the Thirteenth International Penal and Penitentiary Congress. Thus the present report has been generously printed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons of the United States of America, in the prison printing plant at Leavenworth, Kansas.

A/CONF.6/C.1/L.10

9 January 1955

3. Training courses

These courses held in the Training School, Wellington Prison, are designed to present the knowledge, skills and attitudes which officers must have to enable them to carry out their duties completely, accurately and enthusiastically.

The first course, for junior officers, was held in 1950 and covered a four-week period. The programme consisted mainly of "on-the-job" instructions plus a limited number of lectures by selected personnel. Progressive development of the programme by experience has now taken place and the current intensive four-week courses cover the following subjects:

- (a) detailed introduction to the prisons service (purpose of training, conditions of employment, laws, policies, regulations, responsibilities of officers and the programme for inmates from reception to release);
- (b) basic custodial procedures;
- (c) "on-the-job" instruction and observation;
- (d) application of training techniques, e. g. role playing, discussion groups, visual aids (training films, etc.);
- (e) reformative responsibilities of officers;
- (f) training within industry (job instruction techniques);
- (g) weapon training (rifle, revolver and range practice);
- (h) unarmed combat (locks, holds, throws and nerve centres); and
- (i) lectures and discussions by specialist speakers, e.g.:
 - The Prison Service (Secretary for Justice)
 - The prison officer (Assistant Secretary for Justice (Prisons))
 - Psychological approach to delinquency (Justice Department psychologist and Victoria University psychologist)
 - Probation service (Deputy chief probation officer)
 - Prison education (Supervisor of prison education)
 - Penal law (Justice Department legal officer)
 - Classification (Secretary of Classification Board)
 - First aid (Commissioner, St. Johns Ambulance Association)
 - Institutional hygiene and dietetics (Health Department officers).

Senior officer's courses are held periodically to provide for regular and continuous training for the development of fully qualified prison officers. The training syllabus includes a fuller and more detailed coverage of all subjects enumerated in the junior officer's course. In addition, instruction is given in prison bookkeeping and stores.

4. Examinations

Junior officers are eligible to sit for the *Probationary Officers' examination* when they have completed six months service and on the recommendation of the Superintendent. The examinations cover:

- (a) reports and optional questions on penal subjects, and
- (b) Prison Acts, Rules, Regulations and Prison Administrative Instructions.

Successful entrants are entitled to a salary increment after completing 12 months' service. At the end of the second year's service if the officer is considered suitable, the probationary period is concluded and an appointment is made to the permanent staff. The officer receives his second increment which places him in the top salary scale of his grade.

After completing five years continuous service, or in the case of officers with service in the prisons or Borstals in the United Kingdom a lesser term, officers may apply to sit for their Principal Officers' examination. The subjects included in the examination are:

- (a) prison law;
- (b) criminology and penology;
- (c) reports and letter writing; and
- (d) prison bookkeeping and accounts.

5. Promotion of officers

Every officer must pass his *Principal Officers' examination* before he is eligible for promotion.

Periodically, the Public Service Commission call for reports on all officers. These are made by the superintendents and forwarded to the Head Office of the Justice Department where a committee of senior officials studies them for use as a basis

for promotions. Promotions are based on merit and ability rather than length of service. Promotive steps are as follows:

- (a) Deputy Principal Officer;
- (b) Principal Officer;
- (c) Chief Officer;
- (d) Deputy Superintendent; and
- (e) Superintendent.

Other grades available without passing the Principal Officers' examination are as follows:

- (a) Senior Prison Officer;
- (b) Welfare Officer;
- (c) Officer Instructor (2nd grade);
- (d) Officer Instructor (1st grade);
- (e) Officer Instructor (Special grade);
- (f) Farm Manager (2nd grade); and
- (e) Farm Manager (1st grade).

A medal for long service and good conduct is awarded after 14 years' service, and for each period of 8 years' continuous service after the medal has been granted, a bar may be added.

6. Officers' uniforms

Two types of uniforms are issued:

- (a) blue dress uniforms for institutional and court work, and
- (b) khaki for labour gang work.

RESUME

En Nouvelle-Zélande, le personnel du service pénitentiaire est recruté sur la base des qualifications personnelles des candidats et de leur désir sincère de faire une carrière dans l'administration pénitentiaire.

La formation initiale du personnel a lieu dans les divers établissements, sous la direction de fonctionnaires spécialisés qui instruisent les candidats aux divers aspects de leurs fonctions.

L'administration pénitentiaire organise en outre depuis 1950 des cours de formation dans une école spéciale constituée au sein de la prison de Wellington. On y donne des cours intensifs de quatre semaines pour le personnel subalterne, qui portent notamment sur l'organisation et la réglementation pénitentiaires, les méthodes de réadaptation et la responsabilité des fonctionnaires en matière de traitement, et comprennent aussi une formation technique et un entraînement physique. Des cours pour fonctionnaires supérieurs sont également organisés et portent sur les mêmes disciplines, ainsi que sur la comptabilité et l'économat des établissements.

Les candidats au service pénitentiaire doivent passer un examen après six mois d'emploi et avoir accompli deux ans de service satisfaisant avant d'être nommés à titre définitif. Après cinq ans de service ininterrompu, les fonctionnaires peuvent se présenter à l'examen d'agent principal. Seuls les fonctionnaires qui ont réussi cet examen sont éligibles pour une promotion. Les promotions sont basées sur le mérite et sur la compétence plutôt que sur la durée du service.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at CJSmithphd@comcast.net or Emil Wandzilak at emil.wandzilak@unodc.org.