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Report on the Fernald School Program

The goal of this report is to present some background data on the inmates involved in the Fernald School Program at MCI-Concord. One aspect of the report will be to focus on those men in the Fernald Program who would be ineligible for work release because of the nature of their offense. If these types of offenders were able to perform successfully on this program, then it might be reasonable to re-evaluate the statute which excludes them from the work release program. Another aspect of the report will be to compare the Fernald School Program participants with the general MCI-Concord population on several variables in order to determine whether or not the Fernald group differs from the general population.

The Fernald group includes all those men who have been involved in the program from its beginning in Feb., 1968, up to Oct. 1, 1968. There were 33 men in this group. The information on the general Concord population was based on a descriptive study of all the inmates who were in M.C.I., Concord on a given day in November, 1967. The total number of men in this analysis was 404. The principal researcher of the study was Annemarie Dewey of the Counseling Service at M.C.I., Concord.

Findings

As the bottom row in Table 1 shows, 19 (57.6%) of the 33 Fernald Program participants were committed for offenses vs. person. Further, of the 14 men who were involved in the program on Sept. 30, 78.6% were offenders vs. person, in contrast to 42.1% of the 19 men who were no longer involved in the program on this date - i.e. the combination of those who had been released, those who had been removed from the program, and those who had escaped. The fact that the proportion of offenders vs. person has increased in the more recent period of the program's existence indicates that this type of offender apparently did not constitute any greater risk than other types of offenders. In fact, this finding suggests that offenders vs. person may be somewhat better candidates for this type of program.

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Also, the fact that none of the three escapees were offenders vs. person lends a bit more support to this interpretation.

Table 2 presents the average length of time in the program for four categories of Fernald Program subjects. For example, those who were participating in the program on Sept. 30, 1968, had been involved for an average of 2 months, 27 days. The shortest period of involvement was 4 days for a man who had just begun in the program, while the longest period was 7 months, 18 days for a man who had been involved in the program since its beginning. For those who had been released, the average length of time in the program was 3 months, 17 days. The range for releasees went from 1 month, 5 days up to 6 months, 9 days. It is noteworthy that 9 (69.2%) of the 13 releasees had intended to work at the Fernald School after their return to the community and that eight of these apparently did work there for at least some period of time after their release.

Tables 3 - 8 provide a comparison of the Fernald Program participants and the general Concord population on a number of factors. Table 3 shows that the Fernald participants were significantly older than the general Concord population. For example, 57.6% of the Fernald subjects were 25 or older at the present commitment, while 29.4% of the general population were 25 or older. Further, only one subject (3.0%) in the Fernald sample was under 20 years old, while 124 (30.7%) subjects in the general Concord sample were under 20 at their present commitment.

No significant differences were found between the Fernald subjects and the general population on race (Table 4), marital status (Table 5), or type of offense (Table 6). However, with respect to the institution of original commitment (Table 7), it was found that a significantly higher proportion of the Fernald subjects (42.4%) were originally committed to Walpole, when compared to the proportion of the general Concord population which was originally committed to Walpole (20.9%).

Thus, proportionately, over twice as many subjects in the Fernald sample were originally committed to Walpole, as compared to the general Concord sample. Finally, it was found that the two samples were significantly different in terms of the sentences they had received from the courts (Table 8). For example, only 42.4% of the Fernald sample had received 5 year indefinite sentences from the courts, compared to 59.6% in the general Concord sample. In addition, 36.4% of the Fernald sample had received a minimum sentence of at least 5 years, while only 16.0% of the general Concord sample had received a minimum sentence of at least 5 years. Thus, the Fernald Program participants tend to be serving longer sentences than those in the general Concord sample. This is consistent with the finding that a significantly higher proportion of the Fernald sample was originally committed to MCI-Walpole.

Summary

The findings indicate that those who were committed for offenses vs. the person are at least as good candidates for the Fernald School Program as are other types of offenders. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that they might be somewhat better candidates. For example, the proportion of offenders vs. person in the program has increased as the program has developed. At the time of this study 78.6% of the Fernald Program participants were offenders vs. person, while 42.1% of those who had terminated their involvement in the program were offenders vs. person. Also, none of the three men who escaped were offenders vs. person.

Since the Fernald School Program is similar in nature to the Work Release Program, it is likely that offenders vs. person would be equally good candidates for work release. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that it might be well to re-evaluate the statute which declares a man ineligible for work release because he has been committed for an offense vs. person.

A comparison of the Fernald Program participants and the general Concord population revealed that the Fernald subjects were significantly older, had a significantly higher proportion of men who were originally committed to Walpole, and had received significantly longer sentences. No significant differences were found between the two samples on race, marital status, or type of offense.

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Statistical Tables For Fernald School Program Study

Table 1

Current Status (as of Oct. 1, 1968) of Fernald Program

Participants According to Type of Offense

| <u>Current Status</u> | <u>Type of Offense</u> | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | <u>Vs. Person</u> | | <u>Vs. Property</u> | | <u>Other</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
| | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> |
| Present Participant | 11 | (78.6) | 2 | (14.3) | 1 | (7.1) | 14 | (100.0) |
| Released | 6 | (46.2) | 6 | (46.2) | 1 | (7.6) | 13 | (100.0) |
| Removed from Program | 2 | (66.7) | 1 | (33.3) | - | | 3 | (100.0) |
| Escaped | - | | 2 | (66.7) | 1 | (33.3) | 3 | (100.0) |
| TOTAL | 19 | (57.6) | 11 | (33.3) | 3 | (9.1) | 33 | (100.0) |

Table 2

Average Length of Time in Program (as of Oct. 1, 1968)

| <u>Current Status</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>Ave. Time in Program</u> |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Present Participant | 14 | 2 mos., 27 days |
| Released | 13 | 3 mos., 17 days |
| Removed from Program | 3 | 2 mos., 3 days |
| Escaped | 3 | 2 mos., 17 days |

Participants with the General Concord Population on

Selected Variables

| <u>Variable</u> | <u>Fernald Program Participants</u> | | <u>General Concord Population</u> | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>(%)</u> |
| | 33 | (100.0) | 404 | (100.0) |

Table 3 - Age at Commitment

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| 19 or younger | 1 | (3.0) | 124 | (30.7) |
| 20 - 24 | 13 | (39.4) | 161 | (39.9) |
| 25 or older | 19 | (57.6) | 119 | (29.4) |

$$\chi^2 = 15.81, df = 2, p < .001$$

Table 4 - Race

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| White | 22 | (66.7) | 293 | (72.5) |
| Non-White | 11 | (33.3) | 111 | (27.5) |

$$\chi^2 = .52, df = 1, .70 < p < .80$$

Table 5 - Marital Status

| | | | | |
|------------------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| Single | 25 | (75.8) | 291 | (72.0) |
| Married | 5 | (15.2) | 62 | (15.3) |
| Div., Sep., Wid. | 3 | (9.1) | 51 | (12.7) |

$$\chi^2 = .38, df = 2, .80 < p < .90$$

Table 6 - Type of Offense

| | | | | |
|--------------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| Vs. Person | 19 | (57.6) | 235 | (58.2) |
| Vs. Property | 11 | (33.3) | 138 | (34.2) |
| Other | 3 | (9.1) | 31 | (7.7) |

(not significant)

Table 7 - Institution of Original Commitment

| | | | | |
|---------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| Concord | 19 | (57.6) | 287 | (71.6) |
| Walpole | 14 | (42.4) | 84 | (20.9) |
| Other | 0 | (0.0) | 30 | (7.5) |

$$\chi^2 = 9.45, df = 2, p < .01$$

Table 8 - Minimum Sentence

| | | | | |
|----------------|----|--------|-----|--------|
| 4 yrs. or less | 6 | (18.2) | 68 | (16.8) |
| 5 yrs. or more | 12 | (36.4) | 66 | (16.0) |
| 5 indef. | 14 | (42.4) | 241 | (59.6) |
| 5 and 1 day | 1 | (3.0) | 29 | (7.2) |

$$\chi^2 = 9.21, df = 3, p < .05$$