Staff Problems

Mrs. Pauline Morris has suggested (this Journal, Jan. 1963)

- **There is a need for a second look at staff training**
- **need to be aware that the conflict between Staff custody and treatment is not as great as it might appear**
- **Status distinctions should be broken down**
- **Improved welfare facilities are needed for the staff**

In the April Journal two readers commented ; many more letters were received too late for printing. We now present a further, and final, selection.

A. Peckham *(Birmingham)*

THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY a great deal of discontent in the "locals" and the greater part of that discontent stems from the fact that the staff are confused. Their efforts seem to be to no purpose, and there seems to be no ultimate purpose in the policy of *laissez faire*, often interpreted as blind indifference. Many times one will hear, "For all the good we do we might just as well not be here" or "What's the use; put them up in front of the Governor and they get away with it: Seven days privs. and leave them three in a cell. Not worth the bother".

Morale

Morale is desperately low, and these are the audible symptoms. Yet we are not vicious sadists, but in the main, decent kindly men, fairly intelligent, thwarted by aimlessness and lack of policy in the administration. Men who in face of that aimlessness, seek to formulate and impose a common policy of restraint and no nonsense—who are trying, in the face

of indifference, to enforce that common policy for the common good. We sincerely believe that enforcement of this policy will help both the men in our charge and the administration, and restore some sort of order from the chaos and anarchy that pervades the locals at this time. Perhaps this sounds an extreme view, but nevertheless, a majority of staff would endorse it. The aim is to teach the recidivist to be polite and obedient, to conform to an accepted standard, and perhaps to leave prison a little better man, socially more acceptable than on reception: thereby justifying our existence and in part satisfying the high ideals of modern penology.

Frustration and low morale come from the fact that authority does not endorse and uphold that policy, nor does it offer a suitable alternative. To the officer on the landing and in the party it seems to offer nothing.

Security of employment? The price—frustration and boredom can be too high, and any officer knows at least two simple ways of landing up on the wrong side of the gate. Certainly security of employment is a factor, but a sense of purpose, even of vocation should be an even greater factor in this work. Most of us have either one of these latter in good measure, despite the bitter articles in the *Prison Officer's Magazine*.

Put into their proper perspective, they are inarticulate cries of anguish and frustration. The extreme analogy, surely, is the terrorism of African opponents of Apartheid. The frustration, the lack of satisfactory explanation by authority, the explosive reaction against the arrogance of that authority. Yet in neither case does authority consider itself arrogant or blameworthy. They are actuated by the highest ideals, and do what they consider best for "the native".

But the officer is neither one thing nor the other. To the "native" he is the symbol of authority, and to the authority he is—what? An anachronism? We don't know. We feel like the corn between the upper and nether millstones. All our enthusiasm, our initiative, and our sympathy, both for cause and our charges is slowly, inexorably being ground out of us, and we are afraid of ending up as sub-human automata. Some of the weaker ones are ground right out of the gate. Some (the stronger?) go before they are ground down. But the rest of us struggle, to retain our individuality and ideals. And we are afraid we may lose the struggle. Hence the discontented rumblings of the gate lodge and the officers mess.

The Prison Officer's Magazine is like the gauge on the petrol tank of my car. Not a true meter of anything, but a wildly inaccurate indication that can be used as a pointer of the true measure by an experienced reader. And to extend the analogy, the remedy is simple. For the petrol gauge, a new transmitter; for the service, some new means of communicating the true

state of affairs. Both must of necessity remain remotely controlled. The Prison Department must be remote from the landing officer; the impersonal semi-deified "They".

The regime in the Prison Service must remain authoritarian for the same reason. When the emergency arises, and the chief, or a senior shouts "Jump," we must all jump, immediately and in unison. That is simple, logical, and acceptable to all of us. We are parts of a machine controlled by disembodied intellect, and leave our emotions at the gate lodge with our key tallies. We also accept the paradox of "Use your loaf—obey all the rules" and rely on your own good sense in resolving the conflicts. Reform—rule book—best interests of all. Miracles are a daily occurrence to the average officer. Yet despite this we inevitably arrive back at the eternal question—to what end are we working? Shall we, in any given circumstances, consider the best interests of the prisoner. Bend or break the rigid rule and take a hell of a rocket from chief or Governor. "Mr..... you have no right, etc." Philosophically we do our best, and accept many more kicks than halfpence. But we are human, despite what has been said to the contrary; our training, tact, acceptance of the status quo, all inhibit us from taking a swift kick at authority. It isn't lack of courage, but a doctrine, a dogma, that we must *never* in any circumstances undermine authority, that inhibits and restrains the brief obscene reply, or the reasonable and reasoned reply that could often be tendered. Rarely, except in the formal "Please Explain" is anything in the way of explanation requested, nor is it offered. But we still feel the need for sympathy or of sympathetic guidance, and what more natural than to turn to one's colleagues in mess or gatehouse or branch meeting. Our ego is bolstered, and no harm is done to the hierarchy.

Mrs. Morris covers admirably the basic points in the context of containment and reform, and the further divergence of social service, but she does not sufficiently highlight the many other divergencies and frictions. Perhaps because they are legion, and, again paradoxically, fall under the general heading of "Communication", and are outside the scope of her survey.

I have tried to state the point of view of the average officer both as regards policy and the hierarchy.

In lieu of a policy, we formulate one and adhere to it. It is simple and positive. We recognise a chain of command within the hierarchy and give to it our support and loyalty. Officer, P.O., Chief Officer, Governor—each with its own rights and responsibilities, all interdependent and all working to the ideals of containment and reform in their own way. We expect our charges to recognise and conform to that chain of command, and feel resentful when we find them bypassing it. "Shortcircuiting" with its implica-

tion of damage is perhaps a better word in this context. However, the simplest example is perhaps that of a prisoner, refused extra letters or visits, by P.O., and sometimes Governor too, getting them from the poor old padre or well meaning welfare officer.

We feel that he has obtained these things by guile, and in some subtle way undermined the already crumbling props of authority and autocracy. Often, the prisoner feels exactly the same. A master stroke of one-upmanship. So we take it as a personal slight, and curse the chaplain and the welfare. This does not mean that we hate them, but it does add to the confusing state of things, and to our frustation, to the detriment of the common aim.

I doubt if the promotion system is really a cause of discontent. The grumbling is something of a safety valve. Something that can be sniped at without doing any damage to the system—the hierarchy.

The outstanding "Junior" has his chance of accelerated promotion direct into the governor grade. Any system of promotion has its inherent injustices, and in the main promotion based on seniority, merit and selection, is a fair and reasonable system. The ancient dictum "We can't all be gaffers" is generally accepted.

With regard to entry to the staff course, I must express a purely personal view. Feelings are high on this very delicate subject. Surely though, the main cause of discontent is not that outsiders block the promotion to the governor grade of chief officers and others. It is that we in the service feel that we have sufficient bright promising men in the junior officer ranks to fill all the A.G.2 vacancies from the officer ranks. The idea of grey-haired chiefs becoming junior A.G.2's is, to say the least, ludicrous, but is it really impossible to find the requisite number of intelligent young men to train from the basic grades? Surely the basic material is there: A sense of vocation, a high degree of intelligence, maturity, self-control, flexibility, integrity, and the will to succeed, seem to me to be the basic requisites. And surely, except that the Commissioners are prepared to accept a low standard of educational attainment, these qualities are the ingredients for a successful officer. As to that vexed perennial of the "Country House Test" most officers are convinced that it is designed precisely to test those qualities that Mrs. Morris states that it is not. Social acceptability and adaptability. What should I believe? Will the fact that I can meet the Duke or the Dustman on reasonably equal terms see me through? Or will the fact that I much prefer an after lunch cup of tea to the proferred demi-tasse of Turkish coffee fail me? These are very real terrors to the aspiring perspiring candidate. And though the circular from Horseferry House is a model of brevity, it won't relieve his anxiety. Once again "They" are accused of all the

horrors of the Inquisition. What is the dark secret of the "Country House"?

Another facet of the same problem—why cannot we try the same system that worked so well in the Services in war-time and post-war years? Namely let all would-be staff course candidates do, say, a year on the landings as a basic grade officer, working the landings, the shops, the courts and other duties of the local prisons. It would give him an insight into the problems that beset the staff of these prisons, and an absolutely unrivalled opportunity to study the workings of that peculiar animal—the discipline officer. It would give him something that he may never otherwise earn—the respect born of the knowledge that he knows the other side of the picture, not just the outer office and the centre.

But both this problem and our red herring of the promotion roster, have led Mrs. Morris from the true scent. The blue eyed boy is always a subject for cynical comment, yet most of us admit the fact that at some time or other we all have our brief moments of glory when our flaxen hair and blue eyes ensure us a few plums. As to social relationships outside the service, is the survey a true assessment? People in similar occupations tend to have similar interests, and to band together in social circles. Whether they be millionaire stockbrokers or itinerant tinkers doesn't matter. This may be semi-compulsive but is still a fact. If a prison officer wishes to make friends "outside" it is not difficult. My experience is that as we are so different from our public image, after some initial constraint we are respected for our mature matter-of-fact approach to life and for our maturity, and most people respect our reticence with regard to our work. Again the public image of the work is grossly distorted, but works in our favour. Is there any real harm in taking advantage of this distortion, and being a modest hero? Especially when all sorts of minor problems in the social sphere can be solved by this means.

The public is even more confused than the administration and the staff about the policies and administration in prisons, especially after the recent spate of sensational literature, and ill informed criticism in sundry newspapers who carry sensation to the point of bigotry. Yet no voice has been raised in our defence, and we have been expressly forbidden to voice any protest. So, once again the gatelodge philosopher is heard, spreading acid criticism of our detractors, and the administrators who force stoicism upon us. C.N.D., the Howard League, almost anything that has to do with us, and has the public ear, is lumped together and consigned to the depths.

This does not detract in any way from our admiration of the idealists in the various movements. But it does enable us to leave the gatelodge for our various tasks in a sane and balanced frame of mind. All of these outbursts should be

recognised for what they are. Emotional carthartics. Their purpose? Simply to save any further crumbling of the facade.

Something of the same applies to the apparent distortion or misinterpretation of the words reform and rehabilitation. I doubt if there is any real misunderstanding. Some very slight distortion may occur at times, but this is often deliberate. Partly a gentle dig at authority, or from a sense of grievance. Occasionally, when taking up a point in conversation, there may be gross distortion. But is this not satire rather than cynicism, or may it not be a deliberately distorted reflection that screens a true image? Deliberate, from the point of view that the speaker would rather not reveal his true feelings to an undeserving authority. A man who hasn't much confidence left and feels "left out".

The remedy is obvious. Give the man a little more confidence in authority. He wants to believe. He doesn't want "Them" to come down and help bang 'em up. That would destroy his illusion, but if he is told what "They" have in mind, and asked to give it a try, and then comment on it, then his confidence is restored in part. If he finds that authority listens seriously to his comments and criticisms, it won't be long before his confidence is fully restored, and the enquirer will see the true reflection of the man and the job and, perhaps an improved end product. We can't give the psychiatrist a chance, nor any one else a chance, unless or until we know what they want a chance at. Meanwhile, we become more and more confused and bitter, because we feel that we are the only ones in step. Or that we are consistent, but "They" have gone soft.

The sir-ing and para-militarism are unimportant. A part of the facade of the autocratic regime. "Jack knows that he is as good as his masters". He touches his forelock, and his tongue is in his cheek. Nobody is hurt, and the facade is kept intact.

With regard to extended welfare, is this an important issue? If Jack has a problem, and a good master, who better to help him. Although if the master suggests another sympathetic ear, it would be pleasant to know that we are all in the same service. I am inclined to accept, with some reserve, that it might not be a bad thing. I might need a shoulder to cry on one day, and if I do I'd rather it was a comparatively strange one, rather than one I might find beside me when trouble comes inside.

Fundamentally, the problems facing us in closed prisons would be resolved by much more informative and informed direction from the administrators set over us. Most of the tensions would be eased, many frictions would disappear, and morale would improve immensely, if we all knew what it was all about, and could all pull in the same direction.

Whether the policy is *laissez faire* or "flog 'em and top 'em"

does not matter so long as we all understood the policy. A man will take a smack in the eye cheerfully, if it furthers his cause. But he gets very angry over the same smack in the eye, and lashes out when he can't see why he shouldn't be allowed to retaliate.

Referring back a little. The plaintive cry "Give the psychiatrists a chance" need never have been uttered—if only someone had explained that we were going to try a new approach thus;—

With the positive link that I envisage between the upper and lower levels of the hierarchy, the psychiatrists could have two chances even. *Provided they make application through the proper channels!*

OFFICERS TRAINING SCHOOL

P. C. J. Prior *(Leyhill)*

THE PICTURE is out of all proportion to the facts. Staff shortage and overcrowding are facts, not supposition. The authorities, and the officers, are well aware of these facts, as many reforms agreed by both sides are held up by this shortage. Most officers start duty early, and the normal working day in the prison is spread over ten and a half hours; evening activities cause a further lengthening of the day to thirteen hours, the intention being compensation of time the following day, but in most cases this cannot be granted because of shortage of staff for Escorts and Courts. This may cause an officer to be further extended in time to cover these; then evening duty; then straight duty. Weekend off? Oh no—called in. Is it surprising that this situation, multiplied many times, causes some officers to be reluctant to accept new ideas. Reluctance not to the principle, but to the practice.

A New Idea

I suggest that some of the well meaning people who say that this or that activity is necessary to the rehabilitation of the offender, should come along in uniform for a few hours each week to assist, and some of the Prison Department's worries would be over, and the hard pressed officer would be able to rest a bit. After all, if a person is interested in the Police, he becomes a Special Constable; Hospital, a Hospital Auxiliary; Fire Brigade, an Auxiliary Fireman, and so on, but Prisons, not a soul. Theories, ideals, but no action, except to add to the officer's day.

Mrs. Morris says, "Policy is not understood by the discipline officer, who is rarely well informed." I think the officer is the best informed, obviously better than Mrs. Morris. He learns that the basis of

his work is Rule 6, and works to fulfil the ideal it states, but the practical application is, on most occasions, the stumbling block.

Relaxed discipline is mentioned, but here many mistakes are made by wrong interpretation of policy, especially when interpreted as it is in this article. Policy and principles of administration could not be more clearly stated than in Rule 29, and every officer is in possession of a copy of this rule.

The training of officers is challenged, and a mention is made of a failure to break down a barrier against progress. This is entirely wrong. The system is progressing and will advance all the time. This can only be with the full co-operation of the staff, but the restriction is only shortage of staff.

Forty-Five Qualities

The study of the new officer requires that the instructors and others—Governors, Chief Officers, Principal Officers—men of vast experience, must find at least forty-five qualities that will be required at some time during his career. We know these qualities by experience. These have probably never been thought of, but let me list them, not necessarily in order.

Honesty
Stability
Leadership
Intelligence
Reliability
Bearing
Obedience
Initiative
Humility
Fairness
Respect
Loyalty
Tact
Common Sense
Wisdom
Humanity
Astuteness
Temperance
Patience
Enthusiasm
Firmness
Aptitude
Dedication
Responsibility
Decisiveness
Alertness
Adaptability
Self-discipline
Disciplinarian
Punctuality
Personality
Perseverance
Security
Control
Courtesy
Benevolence
Discretion
Sense of Humour
Sympathy
Good Physique
Good Education
Durability
Genuine desire to help
Example
Ambition

Material of this kind is the best that can be secured in the country, but only experience will mould all these qualities into the ideal officer, but of course I differ from the writer on the meaning of "ideal". My ideal officer has acquired the above qualities by experience. "Experience" proves itself, especially in security prisons.

What does the writer regard as her "ideal"? Must the officer accept all that research workers, and others of no real experience say, without question? Is he to forget that he has a duty by statute to the public, to keep a man secure? Is he to forget he has to see that the prisoner has an obligation to the community? The object of imprisonment is to punish and to train. Punishment is the right of the courts, and training belongs to the penal system.

What is training? The basis must be discipline. This is seen as saluting, sir-ring and polishing

buttons. To object to the standard of discipline appears to me to be an encouragement to indiscipline, because these things lead to a standard, and an example, and are only the beginning. Discipline means to train. How? To require a correct attitude in the prisoner, to the community, to the work, to law and order, and an effort on the prisoner's part to improve his conduct and deportment. It must be constructive and positive, and this is the obligation that the prisoner must appreciate, then the ability to distinguish right from wrong will be implanted and confirmed.

The Prison Officers Association has come in for an attack from the author. Why? The relationship between the official side and the staff side is in harmony. The writer should read the history of the Association and see what has been achieved. Obviously, articles were used, but no "research" has been made. Grumbling is an occupational hazard, not only in our service but elsewhere. I wonder if the constitution of the association has been read. The objects: — "To promote and protect the interests of the members, and to regulate their conditions of employment with the employing body". This is done, and is appreciated by both sides.

Why quote individual articles? The executive are not necessarily in agreement with the views stated. This is made quite clear and, after all, it is a wonder we have not had more. What does the author think might have been written by a very angry officer about "reform", that once said his children had asked, "Who is the man that comes home at the weekends", leaving home at 6.0 a.m. and getting home most evenings at 9.0 p.m. and 10.0 p.m., therefore leaving before they were up, and getting home after they were abed. So much could be said both ways, but these conditions are well known and the difficulties are appreciated by both sides. I don't think anyone should try to cause dissension when so much is being achieved by use of the accepted negotiating machinery.

Reference is made to the ordinary officer, the average officer, and his difficulty in understanding the difference between "rehabilitation" and "training", and his reference to these as "reform". Why not? After all, "rehabilitation" means reinstating in a former capacity, and "training" means to teach obedience. "Reform" means to change for the better. Who is confused? Any confusion on the part of the staff is, caused by a wrong interpretation of policy, and interference with it by inexperienced personnel and, because of this, training is seen by the offender as leniency and, instead of firmness in its application, which is not incompatible with benevolence, it is allowed to be seen as sloppy sentimentality, but the officer is not confused about the fact that the

offender earns his release by good conduct and industry.

Training of officers is carried out with every essential point in the treatment of the offender covered, but initial training is limited to instruction and examination, and experience cannot be taught. This must be gained as the United Nations minimum rules state, "After entering on duty, and during their career, the personnel shall maintain, and improve their knowledge and professional capacity". Also, I would direct attention to Paragraph 61—"The treatment of the offender should emphasise not their exclusion, but their continuing part in the community." Community agencies should therefore be enlisted wherever possible to assist the staff of the institutions in the task of social rehabilitation of the prisoner, mark the point, to assist, not to obstruct, or to cause differences of opinion, to the detriment of the penal system.

Illegal

As for the Discipline Code, what bunkum to talk of differentiation between one act and another. Cannot the writer understand that what she suggests is against the law? Every act, after all, has a consequence. I wonder if she has any idea where, if the suggestion were adopted, the act would end, and the consequence begin.

Mrs. Morris refers to prisoners considered as "difficult". I would refer her to the report of the Franklin Committee, where it will be seen that officers of experience in prisons, were fully aware of what "difficult" prisoners were, and the Committee accepted their recommendations for special establishments, and I don't think she will deny that these establishments have assisted and are assisting in the treatment of the offender.

The question of promotion is used to insult officers with regard to their standard of education, but apart from this, the officer knows and the Directors know that the best man for the Governor grade is the experienced one, the Chief Officer, but most of these men are reaching retiring age by the time they reach C.O. rank, therefore there is no career value to them to be raised to this rank. The idea of direct promotion from the ranks on merit has been discussed and as far back as 1948 we endeavoured to agree on a scheme acceptable to both sides. The idea was to promote younger officers by merit, by accelerated promotion. The Association could not accept this, because it could not be guaranteed that officers promoted to Principal Officer, and to Chief Officer, would secure appointments to Governor rank. This would cause a blockage in the higher subordinate ranks to the detriment of the older officer.

The picture is not so bad as Mrs. Morris would make it, and when coloured properly, and in the correct perspective, it is quite good. I see a healthy system emerging, with the officer in a professional capacity.

R. J. Evans *(Wandsworth)*

I FEEL COMPELLED to write and express my thanks for a magnificent article from a person who has obviously studied the subject with meticulous attention. The editorial board, too, deserves the highest praise for being so open minded in allowing such a controversial article to be printed.

One would not presume to try and improve on the article, but I believe there is room to amplify certain points raised. 'Staff problems', she says, 'are never very easy to resolve', but this is far from true. Most of the problems that arise and cause friction and resentment are very often brought about by the method of administration, albeit a benevolent one. When decisions are made mainly on the grounds of expediency, discontent, insecurity and apathy follow naturally. In this modern age expediency seems to be paying a greater part in all our lives, sometimes to the exclusion of integrity.

One must agree with the views of the Chairman and the late Sir Lionel Fox regarding the training and effective use of staff and the high priority given to them. However, Mrs. Morris faults the service when she observes that what is taught at the college falls short of what is actually carried out at many establishments. It would seem that all training should be carried out with a view to putting into practice what has been taught and all establishments should carry on and broaden out the ideas and teaching already given. This means to think and discuss creatively should be encouraged without fear of censure; in this way a real diversified staff could come into being which would surprise many people with its awareness of the penal problems. Everyone is capable of contributing something if only our morbid concern with keeping our 'noses clean' was substituted for something more constructive, then perhaps we shall have a service in which 'unity with diversity' is a working reality.

Having attracted and trained new officers, the next step, if we are to use them effectively, is to retain them. To do this the building or acquiring of new quarters needs to be given a priority too, so that all these officers fully realise that they are necessary to the service.

Referring to our lines of communications, these should be one of the main props of our service. All should participate in the effective running of the establishment, all should have the 'know-how' of what is going on or about to be introduced. Ideas and opinions should flow constantly, and our conception of always playing 'safe' radically altered.

Her observations on promotion and the suspicion she mentions are an indictment on the service. Whether real or imaginary, it is essential for good relationship that this doubt should be eliminated.

I feel sure that this article by

Pauline Morris was intended as constructive criticism and we should be 'big' enough to accept it as such.

P. M. Burnett. (*Pentonville*)

IT WAS IN this "maximum security" prison, I believe, that Pauline Morris did a large part of the research on which presumably her article was based. And in this prison, housing a population and services half as large again as it was built 120 years ago to house, no doubt it would not be hard for the discerning eye to pick out a number of things for valid criticism. But the picture of staff presented is scarcely a fair one.

Self praise being no recommendation, I have hesitated to write, but living and working here, one cannot forbear making a comment. And, anyway, who else is going to make it?

While not all may share the views of the Avant Garde, the staff today, as a body, are modern, patient and understanding in their handling of prisoners. They do not have to rely on uniform for their quiet authority. Their good man management leads to an equally good relationship with all but the lunatic fringe. And this good human relationship is more valuable than any gimmicks or "pie in the sky" schemes. They know this and consequently morale is high.

But how much better the PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL is for a little provocative controversy—provided it is not too long.

L. F. Beale. (*Portsmouth*)

HAVING READ only excerpts in the National Press from the articles by Pauline Morris, I was amazed when I read the full article as it was published in the Journal. I must confess to a feeling that the lady knew very little before I read the Journal, but she has obviously made a very careful study of staff problems and is to be congratulated on her fine survey. As one of the officers who has reached the point of frustration that makes it necessary to leave the service in the near future, may I offer a resumé of personal experience of a period of nearly five years.

After over twenty years as a marine engineer and having been involved in both civil and service social welfare work for a number of years, the urge to consider some sort of social service as a career after leaving the sea led me to studying the recruiting literature for the Prison Service, and applying for an appointment. I pass hastily over the initial training period, where a man must sit with tongue in cheek and acknowledge that he is learning, and therefore ignore

the fact that he intends to be regarded as a complete idiot. This is accepted as part of the training, and after all, success at the training School being all important, both humility and tact must be exercised. Promotion prospects are assured in the literature so one will not always have to be quite so servile. Promotion! Here I would cross swords with Pauline Morris, and would go further and say that very few of the uniformed staff know sufficient about it.

Having joined as a uniformed member one finds that one has to wait two years before being allowed to sit an examination for promotion to the Assistant Governor grade. One can however apply to be considered for the Open Competition at any time, so the "back door" is available to serving officers as well. Qualifications are of course necessary in order to be selected for interview in this competition and I would refute the statement that the prison officer is usually at a disadvantage educationally. It implies that an educated man will not join as an officer in the first instance, and while this may have been the case a few years ago, it is certainly not true of the Service nowadays.

Having been selected for interview however, the officer is in open competition with outside applicants to undergo an interview of some 35 to 45 minutes. I found this interview to be conducted on a very fair basis generally, by people who were primarily Civil Servants, until the questioning passed to a member of the Prison Service. Previous questioners had asked the normal questions one expects in an interview of this sort, but the opening gambit of the Prison Service official and his follow up went thus:

Q. You are a Prison Officer. (There are many ways of making this short statement, but the scorn attached to it had to heard to be believed).
A. Yes sir.
Q. You are serving at ..... Borstal?
A. Yes sir.
Q. What job are you doing there?
A. I've spent the past few months as gatekeeper sir.
Q. Oh! Now I went to a prison once and rang the bell at the gate—a small peep hole opened and a face appeared. The owner of the face yelled, *"AND WHAT DO YOU WANT"*. Do you behave in this manner?

It appeared perfectly obvious to me that I might just as well leave the room, but I naturally attempted to answer his method of questioning to the best of my ability. It came as no suprise however to be informed a few weeks later that I could not be accepted. The following year, having successfully completed two years service, the opportunity presented itself to try for promotion within the Service as well as attempt to be interviewed for the Open Competition. In preparation for this, evening classes

at a Technical College studying Social Service seemed to be advantageous. Working on a shift system however, the onus was on myself to be able to attend every lecture, by seeking the co-operation of fellow officers to exchange shifts with me every other week. This was extremely difficult and consequently some lectures were missed, but in spite of this, reasonable marks were obtained for test papers set at intervals, and a lot was learned. With this added knowledge, plus a further year of experience as an officer as well as the same qualifications that permitted my being interviewed the first year, it came as some surprise to be informed that I would not be accepted for interview again. Nil Desperandum—try the Service approach for promotion. Here the pattern differs.

Like Mrs. Morris, the Prison Department consider the officer educationally retarded, and instead of only filling in an application form and being selected for interview, an educational exam is set as a first hurdle. Success in this entails being summoned to Wakefield for 48 hours and this is what I presume is referred to as the Country House Test. During this time one is interviewed personally by officials, and subjected to group discussions in the presence of a band of invigilators. The outcome of this can be the opportunity to commence a six months' course with those selected from the Open Competition. Here of course the serving officer is in direct competition with the 'outsiders'. There appears to be something drastically wrong with the serving officer when one considers that in 1962, of those who sat the educational exam some 39 passed, and yet after the 48 hours at Wakefield only five were accepted to commence the six months' course. Only five officers suitable for promotion out of a total of over 5,000. I would not subscribe to the thought that the failures lacked social adaptability and confidence, but would suggest that having these officers already in the service, there is no necessity to promote them when the Governor grades can be recruited by taking men who would not consider the service as a career in a subordinate rank, even though promotion prospects are advocated. Let us consider the prospects of a man who like myself has made the maximum of two attempts allowed and been unsuccessful. The only promotion left is, in the first instance, to the exalted rank of Principal Officer. Ten years' service is the first qualification before being allowed to take the necessary exam. If successful, one's name is placed at the bottom of a roster and at present wait from four to five years before being upgraded. So a wait of from fourteen to fifteen years is unavoidable. The wait of ten years before sitting the exam is a comparatively new innovation, as previously one could pass professionally after three years. Of course one receives a rise in pay now on being successful in the ten year test, and in order to get this, the man who had passed

the three year must requalify. There now exists a state of affairs whereby a man can sit the ten year test in company with one who has already passed the three year—the three year man fails but is still promoted before the other chap who may have passed! The P.O.A. executive who give this state of affairs their blessing and insist on promotion by seniority and so called experience, are obviously at fault. The fact must be faced that the semi-literate Principal Officer is still with us. This is no derogatory remark, as without doubt the man could probably quote rules and regulations and is a very useful chap but outside of this .... what? The dice are heavily loaded against the man joining the Service today with ambition, and it would appear that he is fated to spend a long number of years as a turnkey.

Now this expression has long since passed away, but in the main, the Prison Officer's job is just that. The treadmill has been superseded by the mail bag or mat making, but the officer's job is primarily security, and outside of open institutions, the locking and unlocking of doors occupies the greater part of the working day. A recent check on the number of times my own key turned in locks during one shift—and this at a Borstal— reached 150 before I gave up keeping account. During the shift on no less than six occasions the wing was checked and each inmate accounted for visually. I do not doubt the necessity for this, and only narrate it to emphasise the role of custodian.

The officer-inmate relationship has of course improved a great deal in recent years and many reasons are put forward for this, but might I suggest that the principal reason for this is the junior officer. Tradition dies hard for the old timers, and it is the newly joined man who succeeds most in improving relationships. The prison psychologist might suggest that group work has somehing to do with it, but I find this difficult to believe. Having been privileged to be present in a group at the Henderson Hospital where group work can be seen operating at maximum efficiency, no comparison exists in the Prison Service. Personal experience with the borstal inmate reveals their topic of conversations as mainly sex and filth, followed a close second by a warm hearted discussion directed as a personal attack on a member of the staff. Benefit gained appears to be nil and personal problems are strictly infra dig. Or is it that I find myself lacking in the role of group counsellor! With the tendency to run establishments on psychological lines and the flooding of the service with both professional and pseudo psychologists, it would be interesting to see the results obtained were an establishment to be completely staffed by these people. For all deliberate breaches of necessary rules, an hour on a psychiatrist's couch might be a greater deterrent than

loss of privileges or remission. Or would the recidivist go to greater extremes to remain in the safe keeping of the prison walls?

The amount of money being spent to improve the lot of the inmate is incredible. At my establishment (built 1875), a new gymnasium has been erected at a cost of some £1,200, a recreation room modernised at considerable expense to include a full size billiard table and other amenities, and all inmates' rooms (not cells nowadays) being redecorated in pastel shades. This is all probably long overdue, but the officer who has the duty of sleeping in the institution at the gate, is provided with a room that has not seen paint for years, a disgustingly hard bed and a roof over his head that has no respect for rain. In this he spends the night, on call at all times and has to rise to let into the institution a member of the governor grades who may decide to pay a night visit. This could happen not once but twice, and for this duty the officer is rewarded with the princely sum of 6s. 6d.—surely the cheapest night watchman in the country!

The question of pay however is always a subject of controversy. In very few walks of life is a man contented with his earnings and he will always attempt to obtain an increase. When a man asks for a reduction in the hours he works, he doesn't wish to work for less hours—his object is to be paid at overtime rates for the hours worked over a basic number. The P.O.A. executive would disagree with this statement on principle, but it is nevertheless true. One need only look at the case of Chief Officers to prove it. Until they were put on a fixed salary the hours a number of them spent at work were legion, but with the advent of the fixed salary an 84 hour fortnight is almost rigidly adhered to. In the absence of the Chief Officer the senior Principal Officer assumes the role and doubtless puts in hours that are totally unnecessary, which raises his wage invariably to above that of the Chief's salary. I must emphasise that this may not be general but is a personal observation. Similarly, other Principal Officers assume a higher status on the slightest pretext and work hours as they wish. However, in an institution that is happily, completely staffed, the discipline officer is simply compelled to work on a weekend that should be his free time, as his only overtime. For this he is then forced to accept in part payment, hours off duty during week days. I cannot see that a Saturday or Sunday spent on duty can be compensated by hours off during the week. If a man asks for it and can be spared then there is no argument, but if he feels no necessity to take the time off, then payment in full should be allowed for the overtime worked, in the same way as Principal Officers prefer the money to the time.

Petty authority is rife in my experience and one of the biggest hazards one has to contend with. The senior officer who is acting as Principal Officer and the Principal

Officer who is acting as Chief Officer or even takes the guise of acting as Housemaster or Assistant Governor, is a positive menace. The armed services have no comparisons with these men—a complete change has come over them—their knowledge remains static but the role they play has to be seen to be believed.

The question of quarters is a good subject for discussion. In my own case, and I have no doubt that in a number of other cases, a man joining the service is already installed in his own house. He must be prepared to be mobile when he joins if he cannot be appointed to an institution near his home. Having spent a number of years paying mortgage and interest rates this presents something of a problem. On being posted away—a distance of some sixty miles in my own case and with no hope of obtaining quarters—the situation was accepted and a move into bachelor accommodation with casual journeys home also accepted. This is not good enough though, as an allowance is paid to compensate for the separation only as long as the effort is made to reunite the family. One is asked why one's house is not sold and a new one bought in the new area—the difference in the price of property in the two areas is not taken into account. Again, if one has teenage children in the throes of G.C.E. exams who may be seriously affected by a change in schools—this is not considered. One must make every effort to bring one's wife and family to the vicinity of his employment in spite of the Departments' difficulty to provide quarters. One can and does, fill in the necessary forms with white lies while attempting to be posted nearer to home. One is infinitely better off financially in quarters, although there are naturally compensations in buying one's own house, but without doubt the arguments concerning quarters will be with the service for a long number of years to come.

As a very junior officer in length of service, these then are a considered view of some of the frustrations that leads one to seek other avenues in life and return to voluntary work in the social field.

ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL are to publish *'Prison'* a symposium edited by GEORGE MIKES. Announcing this, they say, "This may be a unique generation, which has so widely felt the full range of suffering. It is common in London or New York to spend evenings in the company of people who were prisoners of the Japanese, of Hitler, of the Hungarian Communists—or of their own stress and breakdown. Prison, in some form, is the symbol of it." This book is an attempt to discover what has been learnt, by those who have known it, of this whole range of prison experience—taking prison to be any form of enforced separation from the world of normal life. Thus there are chapters on mental asylum and hospital, as well as political prison and concentration camp. And the emphasis is on the return rather than the experience. What is the lesson of that time of separation? Having travelled to the end of fear, was it the death of fear—or its exposure? That is the question each author was invited to answer.