

Michigan Department of Corrections  
March 22, 1968

WORK-PASS PROGRAM - SECOND YEAR REPORT

The work-pass program of the Michigan Department of Corrections has recently completed its second full year of operation. Part I of this report will summarize the experience of the program to date and indicate such trends as may be appearing. Part II will discuss possible future developments. A supplement, which should be available in about a month, will follow up the first year's placements on the program to see how they have done on parole since successfully completing the program.

I. Total Experience on Program to Date (January 1, 1966 to December 31, 1967)

A. Program Census

Counts

In the first two years:

337 (327 men, 10 women) were placed in jobs

65 (63 men, 2 women) were still working on 12-31-67

272 (264 men, 8 women) had terminated as follows:

199 (73%) (191 men, all 8 women) by normal parole or discharge

60 (22%) were removed for cause<sup>1</sup>

13 (5%) terminated for other reasons (8 at own request, 2 medical, and 3 precautionary--to prevent difficulties which seemed to be developing)

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<sup>1</sup> Removals for cause were as follows:

37 On-the-job Problems:

- 14 poor job performance
- 11 drinking on job
- 6 disagreement with employer
- 3 walk-aways
- 2 fraternization with female employees
- 1 left job without permission, and suspected of theft of purse

23 Institutional Problems:

- 8 drinking in parole camp
- 5 bringing in contraband
- 5 violating institutional rules
- 2 not coming directly back from work at end of day
- 2 not returning unused cash to prison account
- 1 walk-away

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Trends: The number of inmates placed on work-pass jobs has increased, as shown in the following breakdown by year:

Placements by Year and Institution

Institution	Number of Placements		
	1966	1967	Total
State Prison of Southern Michigan	78	56	134
Camps	47	79	126
Reformatory	13	27	40
Cassidy Lake	9	7	16
Training Unit	8	2	10
Detroit House of Correction	3	7	10
Marquette	1	0	1
Totals	159	178	337

This does not represent an increase in the number of workers on the job at a given time (since placements are somewhat shorter now, as indicated below), but it does mean that over a given period of time more individuals are participating in the program. The decrease in placements from the State Prison of Southern Michigan in 1967 represents a general drop in employment opportunities in the Jackson area. This is due partially to the reluctance of some industrial employers to hire for a short time.

There are no trends, as such, in the removals from the program or reasons for these.

Number of Jobs Held

84% of those terminated had held one job

13% held two jobs

3 % held three jobs

Trends: There has been some reduction in multiple jobs. In 1966, one man in five held more than one job; in 1967 this dropped to one in seven.

Time on Program

The median length of time on the program is now about four months. This ranges from a few days to one year.

Trends: The time on the program has become somewhat shorter. The 1966 placements had a median time on program of 4½ months.

Employers

Sixty-seven employers have provided 388 job placements to date. These employers include a wide variety of business enterprises, including service stations, automotive and auto parts dealers, restaurants, farms, car-washes, contractors, and several manufacturing and industrial firms. Eight of the ten women on the program were employed by a theological seminary; the other two by a state institution.

Trends: In 1966, 50 firms provided 185 job placements  
In 1967, 38 firms provided 203 job placements

The tendency has been to place larger numbers of men with the same employers, as indicated in the following list of the top five employers in each year (actual firm names are not shown here):

Five Largest Users of Work-Pass Men

1966		1967	
Firm	Placements	Firm	Placements
Abrasives Mfg.	17	Household Supplies Mfg.	25
Electric Plating	12	Abrasives Mfg.	21
Household Supplies Mfg.	9	Automotive Parts Mfg.	19
Auto-Motor Machinists	8	Car-Wash	16
Car-Wash	8	Machine-Tool Works	12
Total	54	Total	93

B. Financial Summary

Total Earnings

Total Take Home Pay	1966	\$154,300
Earned During:	1967	<u>\$271,200</u>
	Total	\$425,500

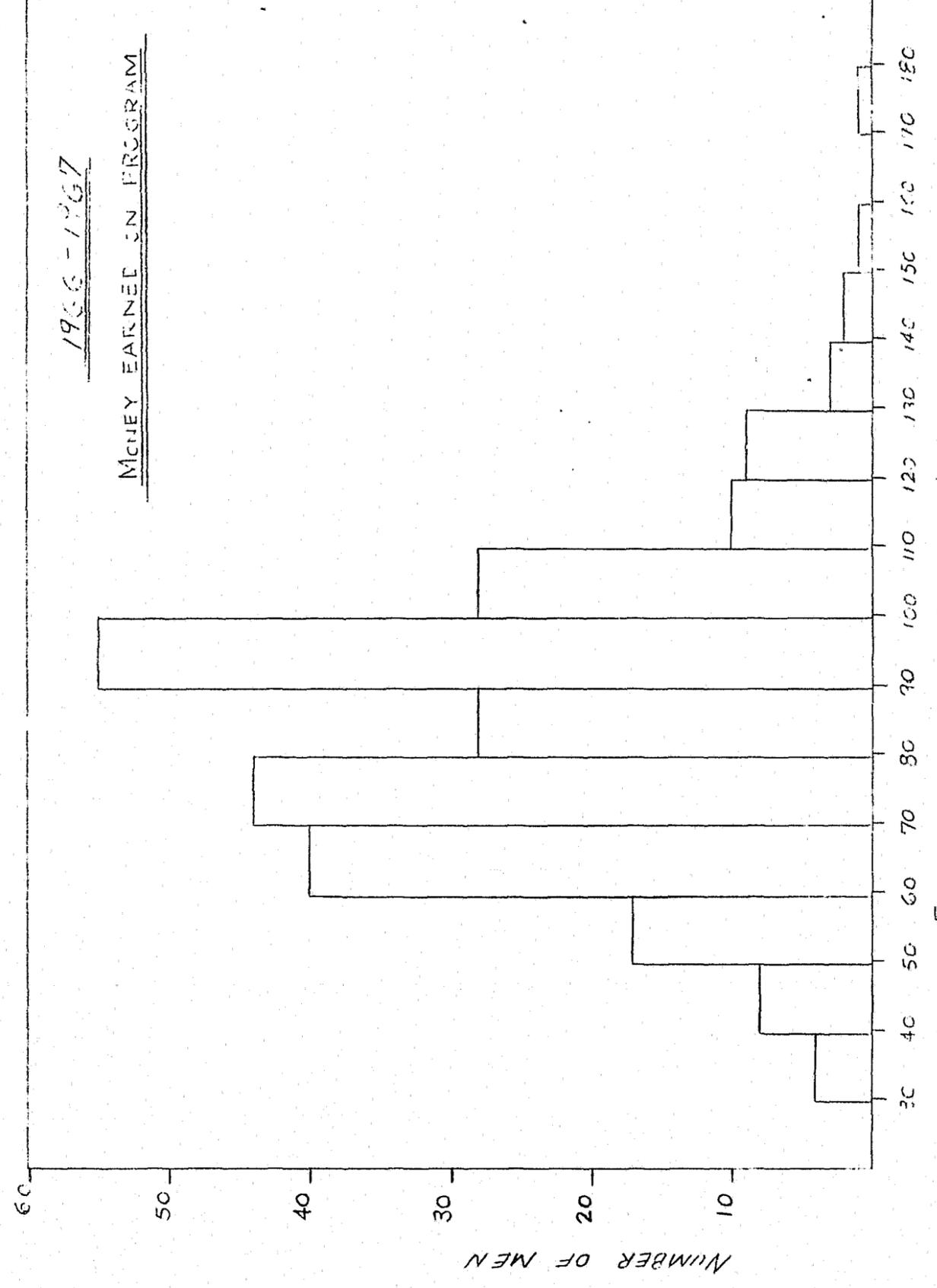
The increase is due to the fact that the program took some time in 1966 to build up to full strength, so that income in the early months of that year was limited. 1967 earnings shown here include estimated earnings for those still on the program at the end of the year.

Those placed on the program in 1966 have all terminated, and earned an average of \$1,500 each while on the program. Those placed in 1967 who have terminated so far have averaged only about \$1,100 each, but this might be expected; those on the program longest will earn the most, and many of these had not terminated at the end of the year.

Wages

The average weekly pay (gross) was \$82.00 for men, and \$50.00 for women. Nearly three-fourths of the men earned \$70.00 per week or more; one-fifth were earning \$100.00 or more. Figure one shows the wage distribution graphically.

Trends: Wages were not quite so high during the second year. The average pay was \$85.00 in 1966, and \$75.00 in 1967. This is not due to any decrease in the better paying jobs--the highest paying jobs to date were secured during the second year, in fact---but is rather due to the fact that the increased volume of placement has been in the less skilled trades, and this has lowered the average. Short term placements are generally secured most readily in jobs requiring little investment of training time for the employer.



FINAL SALARY PER WEEK (DOLLAR UNIT)

FIGURE 1

Disposition of Take Home Pay

The \$425,500 earned during the two years (including estimated earnings for those not terminated at the end of that period) was distributed as follows (percentages taken from actual terminations to date):

Expenditure	%	\$
Saved for release	37.2%	\$158,300
Sent home for dependents	22.7%	\$ 96,500
Sent home for others <sup>1</sup>	8.4%	\$ 35,800
Job-connected expenses	15.3%	\$ 65,200
Administrative fees (paid into general fund)	5.9%	\$ 25,000
Miscellaneous personal expenditures	10.5%	\$ 44,700
Totals	100%	\$425,500

<sup>1</sup> For investment in savings accounts, for repaying old debts, etc.

Trends: The distribution has remained about the same for 1966 and 1967 placements who have terminated to date. The 1967 placements have saved about 6% more than 1966 placements for release; the other categories showed reductions of one or two percent each in 1967. These changes are too small to be very meaningful.

During 1967, a procedure was established where dependent status is investigated by field staff before approval. Inmates with dependents generally are required to send them at least 50% of take-home pay. The Department of Social Services is notified whenever a check is sent to a dependent who has been receiving public assistance.

Job Performance

Employer evaluations were available for 260 workers. The following table shows the employers' ratings on five job characteristics:

Characteristic	Percent of Men Rated:				Total
	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding	
Skill	3%	12%	65%	20%	100%
Industry	4%	15%	52%	29%	100%
Dependability	8%	13%	54%	25%	100%
Getting Along With Other Workers	2%	7%	69%	22%	100%
Taking Orders	4%	12%	56%	28%	100%
Average for all characteristics	4%	12%	59%	25%	100%

Trends: Evaluations have remained at these levels during both years.

General Employers' Reactions

As could be inferred from the above tabulated evaluations, the general reaction has been quite favorable. Even the majority of those employers who had some difficulty with the job performance of work-pass men continued to hire others, and some at an increased level. There continue to be a number of explicitly favorable comments on the program and the men. The general impression is that work-pass placements do better as a group than others hired off the street, and some have been regarded as exceptionally qualified. One employer requested four men; only three were available at the time, so he took these. When a fourth became available, he proved not to be needed; the first three were taking care of all four jobs. The most frequent negative comments of employers have to do with the relatively short time inmates are on the program and the fact they are not permitted to remain after parole.

## II. General Comments

During 1967, the program was extended to include three placements out of county jails. All three of these were successfully completed. Because of crowding in the county jails in the major population areas where most employment exists, it is unlikely that this experiment will be widely used. However, it does represent an additional resource in helping selected inmates re-enter the community gradually. It may also suggest the desirability of a work-pass type facility in Detroit. The feasibility of such a facility is now being explored.

The Department's recently inaugurated study-pass program is an outgrowth of work-pass, and is closely modeled after it. The relative success of work-pass demonstrated the feasibility and desirability of allowing selected inmates to pursue educational opportunities in the community.

Transportation continued to be a problem throughout the two years of the program. Most men ride to and from work with fellow employees. A few removals resulted from failure of fellow employees to return work-passers directly to the institution. No problem arose where employers did the transporting. A major transportation problem was resolved by hiring a driver on a contractual basis to transport an average of twelve Camp Program and Cassidy Lake men to three different employers in an old departmental bus. The driver's salary and bus expenses are covered by the inmates involved. It is likely that more placements could be found if transportation problems could be solved.

What will be or should be the ultimate size of the program? This cannot be answered definitely, as it depends a good deal upon general economy and the standards of selection. An economic downturn probably would result in drastic curtailment. A lowering of eligibility requirements to increase program size would be likely to bring more program failures. While it is likely that some inmates presently excluded would do well on the program, it is the Department's intention to maintain present criteria. For even now some inmates who are eligible according to current guidelines are not processed because of lack of jobs.

For the past several months, approximately 65 inmates have been on work-pass status on any given date. Given the resolution of transportation difficulties, the establishment of a small facility in Detroit and the gradual development of additional employers, a modest rise could be predicted. Under present economical conditions and eligibility requirements, it appears that up to 100 inmates a day could be safely placed on work-pass status.

Perhaps a summary evaluation of the program should wait for the supplement which will follow early graduates from the program onto parole. On the other hand we do not need to know the parole outcome to say that men on the program earned substantial sums of money for useful purposes. Nearly \$100,000 was sent to families, most of whom had been on ADC, and parole agents report that the money saved for release has eased the re-entry of many men into the community. The work-pass experience has itself served as a valuable transitional period of adjustment between the prison and the free world.

The present analysis is confined to that which can be objectively counted and measured. It can make no estimate of possible gains in self-esteem and satisfaction which have resulted from successfully taking part in the program, but those who work with these men say that the gains of morale are apparent. These are all valuable and positive benefits and far outweigh the few problems and difficulties which have accompanied them. We can only conclude that the program is clearly worthwhile.

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