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MINNESOTA STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

WORK RELEASE
IN MINNESOTA
1970

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Prepared by the Detention Services and the Division of Research and Planning

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the sixth annual summary of activity in the Work Release program in Minnesota. (The reader is referred to the initial report[1] for a description of the provisions of the program). Like the 1969 report, this publication deals mainly with misdemeanant offenders; some felons are included. See TABLE 4 for a detailed account of how felons are included in this report.

The data in this booklet were developed with the cooperation and participation of the sheriffs and jail administrators of each county involved. These officials submitted to the Minnesota Department of Corrections a report for every individual who was terminated from the Work Release program in their county during calendar year 1970 (see Appendix for report form used).

During 1970 there were 2606 persons (2589 males and 17 females) who completed the program or were terminated for other reasons. This represents a decrease from 1969 of 447 individuals (or 14.6%). (For the same period there was a decrease of approximately 143 in the number of individuals held under sentence in county jails, workhouses, and lockups. In 1970 there were 11,091 persons committed, compared with 11,234 persons held under sentence in 1969).

Like the two previous reports, this publication includes data from the workhouse of Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, only in Tables 1 and 3. More specific information about work releasees from these two counties can be obtained by contacting each county directly. However, the inclusion of only partial data from these two metropolitan counties should be kept in mind when comparing the results of this report with those of years previous to 1968, which did include these data.

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1 "Work Release in Minnesota", Minnesota Department of Corrections, St.Paul, 1966.

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Data included in tables pertain only to those individuals whose work release was terminated during 1970. Tables are arranged to indicate the descriptive variables by sex and percentages of totals in all cases.

Three measures of central tendency are used throughout this report to describe the data. They are the ARITHMETIC MEAN (simply referred to as the MEAN), the MEDIAN and the MODE. All three are averages that can be used to describe data set up in some of the tables in this report.

The MEDIAN is the "middle number" in a group of ordered numbers. The median number indicates that 50% of the numbers are greater and 50% of the numbers are smaller than the median.

The MEAN is the "balance point" or arithmetic average of a group of numbers.

The MODE is the "most popular" number in a group of numbers. It is simply the number which occurs most frequently in a group of numbers.

For a more complete explanation please refer to any basic statistics textbook.

Findings

Commitments from the three metropolitan counties accounted for 83% of the work releasees; Hennepin County (Minneapolis) accounted for 51%, Ramsey County (St. Paul) for 28%, and St. Louis County (Duluth) for 4%. However, metropolitan participation in work release was down fromthe previous year in terms of both numbers and percentages; in 1969, 2708, or 88.7% were. The participation of rural counties increased in 1969, 345, or 11.3% of the work releasees were committed from non-metropolitan counties and also in 1970, 451, or 17.3% were. However, the total number of misdemenant offenders in Minnesota who were placed on work release decreased from 3053 in 1969 to 2606 in 1970, a 14.6% decrease.

TABLE 1. COUNTY OF COMMITMENT

COUNTY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS	PERCENT
Hennepin	1328	8	1336	51.3
Ramsey	727		727	27.9
St. Louis	91	1	92	3.5
Total Metro	2146	9	2155	82.7
Aitkin	1			
Anoka	70	1	71	2.7
Carlton	12		12	0.5
Cass	2		2	0.1
Chisago	1		1	*
Clay	13		13	0.5
Cook	3		3	0.1
Crow Wing	1		1	*
Dakota	33		33	1.3
Douglas	9		9	0.3
Faribault	12	3	15	0.6
Fillmore	1		1	*

TABLE 1 (Continued)

COUNTY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS	PERCENT
Freeborn	36		36	1.4
Isanti	6		6	0.2
Lake	3		3	0.1
Lyon	10		10	0.4
McLeod	1		1	*
Martin	2		2	0.1
Meeker	2		2	0.1
Morrison	5		5	0.2
Mower	55	1	56	2.1
Olmsted	63	2	65	2.5
Pennington	14		14	0.5
Pipestone	5		5	0.2
Polk	23		23	0.9
Pope	4		4	0.2
Rock	1		1	*
Roseau	14		14	0.5
Scott	8	1	9	0.3
Stearns	11		11	0.4
Stevens	2		2	0.1
Todd	1		1	*
Wadena	1		1	*
Washington	7		7	0.3
Wilkin	3		3	0.1
Winona	8		8	0.3
Total Rural	443	8	451	17.3
Total Metro & Rural	2589	17	2606	100.0

*Indicates value is less than .05%
NOTE: This table includes the Minneapolis City and Ramsey County Workhouse

As in previous years, more than half of the offenders placed on work release had been sentenced for traffic offenses. Most frequent offenses were driving after suspension or revocation of license (30%) and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol (22%).

TABLE 2. OFFENSES

OFFENSE	MALES	FEMALE	TOTALS	PERCENT
Misdemeanors-Personal				
Assault	28	1	29	3.6
Indecent Conduct	2		2	.3
Non-Support	14		14	1.7
Other Crimes Against Persons	2		2	.3
Misdemeanors-Property				
Checks	19	2	21	2.6
Fraud	1		1	.1
Shoplifting	4		4	.5
Possessing or Receiving Stolen Property	6		6	.8
Theft (Except Shoplifting and Auto Theft)	21		21	2.6
Tampering with Auto	5		5	.6
Using Auto Without Owners Permission	4		4	.5
Vandalism	4		4	.5
Traffic Violation				
Driving Under Influence	174	3	177	22.1
Driving after Suspension or Revocation	240		240	30.0
Moving Traffic Violations	23		23	2.9
Non-moving Traffic Violations	3	1	4	.5
Leaving Scene of Accident	3		3	.4
Open Bottle	13	1	14	1.7
No Driver's License	30		30	3.8
Miscellaneous Misdemeanors				
Contempt of Court	17		17	2.1
Disorderly Conduct	16		16	2.0
Drug Law	3		3	.4
Drunkeness	28		28	3.5

TABLE 2. (Continued)

OFFENSE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS	PERCENT
Escape	2		2	.3
Firearms	2		2	.3
Liquor Laws	32	1	33	4.1
Trespassing	1		1	.1
Other Misdemeanor				
Felonies	17		17	2.1
Crimes Against Person Excl. Sex	10		10	1.2
Crime Against Property	57		57	7.1
Sex Crime	1		1	.1
Other Felonies	1		1	.1
Gross Misdemeanors				
Crimes Against Person Excl. Sex	1		1	.1
Crimes Against Property	2		2	.3
Sex Crime	2		2	.3
Crime By Negligence	2		2	.3
Not Reported	1		1	.1
Total	791	9	800	100.0

About 69% of the work releasees were sentenced to city or county workhouses; this high percentage might be expected since 79% of the participants were sentenced by Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, the only counties with workhouses that have work release programs. (St. Louis County has a workhouse but it is not used to house work release participants.)

TABLE 3. TYPE OF INSTITUTION TO WHICH SENTENCED

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS	PERCENT
Workhouse	1798	8	1806	69.3*
County Jail	550	7	557	21.3
City Jail or Lockup	118	1	119	4.6
Not Reported	123	1	124	4.8
Total	2589	17	2606	100.0

NOTE: Minneapolis City and Ramsey County Workhouses are included in this table.

Because this report deals mainly with misdemeanant offenders (less than 10% of the 800 work releasees were sentenced for felonies), it is not surprising that a high proportion (71%) were sentenced by Municipal Courts. In the Minnesota Judicial Structure, misdemeanor cases are usually heard at the municipal level. District Court felons may be included in this report in two ways: 1. The District Court judge determines that an offender should serve his sentence in a county jailing facility rather than in the State Prison and the felon is subsequently placed on work release, or 2. After a felon is granted a work release from a State Institution, he may be transferred to a county jail or workhouse for work release housing.*

TABLE 4. TYPE OF COMMITTING COURT

TYPE OF COURT	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS	PERCENT
Justice of Peace	45	1	46	5.7
Municipal	565	6	571	71.4
Municipal-Probate	59		59	7.4
District	117	2	119	14.9
Not Reported	5		5	0.6
Total	791	9	800	100.0

*A complete report regarding the work release program for felons in Minnesota may be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

The median length of sentence given to work release participants was 30.5 days. The most frequent sentence given was 30 days.

TABLE 5. LENGTH OF SENTENCE

DAYS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS	PERCENT
1-9	26		26	3.3
10-29	154	2	156	19.5
30-44	243	5	248	31.0
45-59	43		43	5.4
60-89	113	2	115	14.4
90-119	136		136	17.0
120-179	25		25	3.1
180-239	24		24	3.0
240-299	11		11	1.4
300-365	15		15	1.9
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Median (Ungrouped) 30.5 days
Mean (Ungrouped) 59.6 days
Mode (Ungrouped) 30 days

Nearly half (49%) of the work releasees were 25 years of age or younger. This is probably related to the high proportion of traffic violators (61.4%), offenders who tend to be young men. The median age was 26.1 years; the most frequent age(mode) was 19 years.

TABLE 6 AGE AT COMMITMENT

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
16-17	5		5	0.6
18-20	164	3	167	20.9
21-25	218	1	219	27.4
26-30	126	1	127	15.9
31-35	70		70	8.7
36-40	53	2	55	6.9
41-45	57	1	58	7.2
46-50	48	1	49	6.1
51-55	22		22	2.8
56-60	12		12	1.5
61-65	4		4	0.5
66-70				
71-75				
Not Reported	12		12	1.5
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Meidan (ungrouped) 26.1 years
Mean (ungrouped) 29.4 years
Mode (ungrouped) 19 years

As in previous years, the work releasee generally had retained their previous jobs (46%) or had found employment themselves (43%). This demonstrates an important function of the work release program - it enables offenders to serve their sentences without seriously disrupting their employment and earnings.

TABLE 7 SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT WHILE ON WORK RELEASE

SOURCE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Retained Previous	358	7	365	45.6
Self	342	2	344	43.0
Spouse	4		4	.5
Relative	12		12	1.5
Social Agency	14		14	1.8
Friend	10		10	1.2
Jail Personnel	28		28	3.5
Other	17		17	2.1
Not Reported	6		6	.8
Total	791	9	800	100.0

About 75% of the program participants were working at unskilled labor jobs. This high proportion may be in part a reflection of ability of professional and skilled persons to pay fines rather than serve sentences for misdemeanant offenses. It is also probably related to the high number of young people, who are likely to still be unskilled.

TABLE 8 OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF JOBS

LEVEL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Professional	12	1	13	1.6
Clerical-Sales	13		13	1.6
Agricultural	15		15	1.9
Skilled Labor	130	3	133	16.6
Unskilled Labor	593	5	598	74.7
Student	22		22	2.8
Not Reported	6		6	.8
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Approximately one third of the work releasees earned $100 to $300 and another quarter earned $300 to $500 during their participation in the program. The median gross income was $320; the median time served on work release was 22.8 days. These data indicate the value of the work release to the offenders' families and to the community. Without this opportunity to continue employment many of the offenders' families and to the community. Without this opportunity to continue employment many of the offenders' families would have had to find alternative sources of support, frequently welfare. In addition, the community need not bear the costs of their incarceration as the inmates pay for room and board while they are on work release, and the participants contribute taxes from their earnings.

TABLE 9 GROSS DOLLAR INCOME DURING WORK RELEASE

GROSS DOLLAR INCOME	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
$0	24		24	3.0
$1-49	19		19	2.4
$50-99	50		50	6.2
$100-299	259	3	262	32.8
$300-499	188	2	192	24.0
$500-749	127	2	129	16.1
$750-$999	55		55	6.8
$1000-1499	46		46	5.8
$1500-1999	15		15	1.9
$2000-2999	7		7	.9
$3000-3999				
$4000-4999	1		1	.1
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Median (Ungrouped) $320.00
Mean (Grouped) $420.55
Mode (Ungrouped) $0

Almost half (46%) of the work releasees paid from $26 to $75 for room and board to the jail or workhouse in which they were houses. Using the median payment, $61.60, it can be inferred that counties were able to save $49,280 in inmate support.

TABLE 10 AMOUNT PAID FOR BOARD AND ROOM DURING WORK RELEASE

DOLLARS PAID	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
$0	27	1	28	3.5
$1-25	133	2	135	16.9
$26-50	182		182	22.7
$51-75	181	5	186	23.2
$76-100	80		80	10.0
$101-150	90	1	91	11.4
$151-200	30		30	3.7
$201-250	15		15	1.9
$251-350	22		22	2.8
$351-450	11		11	1.4
$451-550	8		8	1.0
$551-650	4		4	.5
$651-750	4		4	.5
$751-850	4		4	.5
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Median (Ungrouped) $61.60
Mean (Ungrouped) $88.51
Mode (Ungrouped) $25.00

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There was no information reported regarding number of dependents for 35% or the offenders. There were 21% who had no dependents, 15% who had one, 11% who had two, and 10% who had three dependents.

TABLE 11 NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS

NUMBER	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
None	163	4	167	20.9
1	116	1	117	14.6
2	86	2	88	11.0
3	79		79	9.9
4	45		45	5.6
5	13	2	15	1.9
6	6		6	.8
7	2		2	.2
8	1		1	.1
Not Reported	280		280	35.0
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Median 0.8
Mean 1.6
Mode None

Almost half (48%) of the participants spent 10 to 29 days of their sentences on the work release program. The median time served was 22.8 days; the most frequent time spent on work release was ten days.

TABLE 12 DAYS OF SENTENCE SERVED ON WORK RELEASE

DAYS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
1-9	137		137	17.1
10-29	382	4	386	48.3
30-44	137	5	142	17.8
45-59	53		53	6.6
60-89	48		48	6.0
90-119	17		17	2.1
120-179	14		14	1.8
180-239	2		2	.2
240-299	1		1	.1
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Median (Ungrouped) 22.8 Days
Mean (Ungrouped) 29.1 Days
Mode (Ungrouped) 10 days

Most (62%) of the participants worked days and were incarcerated during nights and weekends to serve their sentences. Another 30% worked nights and served days and weekends in the jails.

TABLE 13 HOW SENTENCE WAS SERVED WHILE ON WORK RELEASE

HOW SERVED	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Nights & Weekends	485	7	492	61.5
Days & Weekends	233	1	234	29.3
Weekends Only	41	1	42	5.2
Other Combination	14		14	1.8
Not Reported	18		18	2.2
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Over half (53%) were terminated from the work release program because they had completed their sentences, and another 22% were terminated because the remainder of their sentences was suspended. Seven per cent absconded, while another four percent violated the rules of the program and were terminated. While a higher percentage absconded during 1970 (3% absconded in 1969), a lower percentage was terminated for rules violation (8% violated rules in 1969.) Thus in 1970, as in 1969, there were 11% of the work releasees who were terminated for unsatisfactory reasons.

TABLE 14 REASON FOR TERMINATION FROM WORK RELEASE

REASON	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Sentence Completed	417	5	422	52.8
Sentence Suspended	169	4	173	21.7
Absconded	57		57	7.1
Violation of Rules	29		29	3.6
Employment Ended	5		5	.6
Parole	1		1	.1
At Own Request	32		32	4.0
Other Reasons	69		69	8.6
Not Reported	12		12	1.5
Total	791	9	800	100.0

Approximately half (56%) of the misdemeanants retained their work release employment after the completion of their sentences, a much lower percentage than last year (82%). However, this information was unavailable for a third of the participants in 1970. During both years it was reported that about 6% did not retain their jobs. Better follow-up information might have indicated whether the work release program was incentive for location of employment, as it appeared from the last report.

TABLE 15 WHETHER OR NOT WORK RELEASEE RETAINED SAME JOB AFTER COMPLETION OF SENTENCE

PREVIOUS JOB RETAINED	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Yes	438	7	445	55.6
No	49	1	50	6.3
Unknown	263	1	264	33.0
Not Reported	41		41	5.1
Total	791	9	800	100.0

TABLE 16 OPINION OF CUSTODY PERSONNEL REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT PROGRAM BENEFITED WORK RELEASEE

PROGRAM BENEFITED	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Yes	584	5	589	73.6
No	187	4	191	23.9
Not Reported	20		20	2.5
Total	791	9	800	100.0

When custody personnel were asked their opinions regarding the value of the work release program, 74% indicated they felt that the program did benefit the offender. Of those who reported that the program did not benefit the inmate, nearly all thought a straight sentence would have been preferrable.

TABLE 17
(As related to a "no" answer in Table 16) What Sentence Would Have Been more Beneficial?

	MALE	FEMALE	N/R	TOTAL	PERCENT
Straight Sentence	175	4		179	93.7
Fine	8			8	4.2
Probation					
Other	4			4	2.1
Total	187	4		191	100.0

TABLE 10 OPINION OF CUSTODY PERSONNEL: IF THE WORK RELEASE PROGRAM DID NOT HELP, WHAT SENTENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE BENEFICIAL

BETTER SENTENCE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Straight Sentence	175	4	179	22.4
Fine	8		8	1.0
Probation				
Other	5		5	.6
Not Applicable	603	5	608	76.0
Total	791	9	800	100.0

SUMMARY

During the calendar year 1970, 11,091 individuals were held under sentence in county jails, workhouses, and lockups. Of these 2606 (or 23.5%) served all or part of their sentences in the Work Release Program. These figures are in contrast to those of 1969, when 11,234 individuals were held under sentence in county jails, workhouses, and lockups, and 3053 persons (27.2%) served all or part of their sentences on Work Release.

There were 39 counties utilizing Work Release in 1970, compared to 38 in 1969 and 32 in 1968. A smaller percentage (82.7%) of those on Work Release was sentenced by metropolitan counties in 1970 (compared to 88.7% in 1969.) Most offenders (69.3%) were housed in the workhouses serving the metropolitan counties, and (71.4%) received sentences from Municipal Courts. Median length of sentences in 1970 was 30.5 days (down from 44.1 days in 1969), and median age of offenders at time of commitment was 26.1 years, only .4 years above the corresponding figure in 1969.

The majority of those on Work Release either retained previous employment (45.6%) or located employment themselves (43.0%). Although only 3.5% located employment through assistance by correctional personnel, this small figure, and the drop in percentage of those finding employment themselves, may somewhat attributable to the "tight" job market now extant.

As in previous years, most work releasees were employed as unskilled laborers (74.7%) or skilled laborers (16.6%). Earnings of those serving sentences on Work Release rose sharply in 1970: 56.8% earned gross incomes of between 100-500 dollars during a median stay of 22.8 days, and another 31.6% exceeded the $500 figure. This contrasts with the figures of 1969, in which 37.3% earned between $100-$500, and another 20% earned more than $500. The median amount paid to jailing facilities for room and board was $61.60, representing an estimated $49,280 savings to the municipalities which would otherwise bear this expense. While the per diem rate is a 31.4% increase over the same figure for 1969, the total savings to communities decreased becasue of fewer Work Release commitments and shorter sentences. Monies earned during participation in Work Release enabled offenders to continue support of their dependents while serving sentences; 35.5% had from 1-3 dependents and 8.3% were responsible for 4-6.

Almost half (48.3%) of the participants served 10-29 days of their sentences on Work Release; median time was 22.8 days, slightly longer than in 1969.

Most work releasees were terminated due to completion of sentence. Only 3.6% were terminated because of rule violation, and 7.1% absconded; these two figures combined are very close to the combined figures of 1968 and 1969. It appears that approximately 10% of those admitted to Work Release will be terminated in this manner during a given year.

Upon completion of sentence, only 6.3% of program participants definitely did not retain their Work Release employment, although data on this issue are considerably lacking. Although 1970 saw an increase in the percentage of individuals retaining precommitment employment, because of the inadequate nature of the data, it is difficult to determine actually what percentage did so.

Custody personnel in the jail facilities believe that participation in Work Release was beneficial in 73.6% of the cases served. This figure is below that of 1969, which was below the 1968 figure, which in turn was below the 1967 figure. Although it may be interesting to speculate as to the reasons for this downward pattern, it would be premature to indicate the existence of a trend.