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23 February 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Fitness Report

1. Immediately upon the adoption of the Fitness Report last fall, steps were taken which will lead to its eventual improvement. A questionnaire was constructed, and from 1000 to 1500 copies distributed to those who were rendering Fitness Reports.

2. The questionnaire is being returned very slowly. As yet, an insufficient number have been received to make a thorough analysis profitable. A preliminary analysis of the 173 questionnaires that have been received suggests three conclusions: (1) there are questions which will need changing; (2) there is no overwhelming objection among supervisors to the report as it stands; and (3) an opinion held by the A and E Staff is confirmed, namely that it is impossible to find a question that will not be objected to by someone.

3. Concerning the 50 items in Section IV, one of the most controversial sections of the report, raters were asked to strongly approve, approve, indicate whether the item was acceptable, disapprove, or strongly disapprove the use of each item. The percentage of raters indicating the various degrees of approval or disapproval for a typical series of items are given below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Strongly Approve</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Acceptable</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Strongly Disapprove</u>	<u>Omit</u>
Can make decisions on his own when need arises	45	41	9	2	1	3
Has initiative	48	35	9	3	2	3
Can get along with people	32	45	9	8	2	4
Knows when to seek assistance	36	45	12	3	1	3
Calm	11	40	29	14	2	4
Tough minded	5	17	23	40	11	5
Stimulating to Associates: a sparkplug	10	33	34	14	5	3
Admits his errors	26	39	24	5	2	3

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4. A tentative conclusion from reactions to the questionnaire is that from 10 to 15 of the 50 items in Section IV will need deletion or modification.

5. It should be noted that 60 per cent of the 173 returning questionnaires have been with the Agency more than 4 years. Thus, the questionnaires have been completed by relatively experienced Agency personnel.

6. One of the most controversial items concerning the Fitness Report is whether or not it should be shown to the individual rated. Only 23 per cent actually disapprove of the section concerning showing the report as it now stands. 62 per cent believe that it should be required to be shown to an unsatisfactory employee and 50 per cent believe it should be shown to other than unsatisfactory employees. In terms of what people actually do, 45 per cent of the Fitness Reports received and tabulated have been shown to the individual. These results indicate the controversial nature of this problem and indicate that any departure from the present method will require decisions at a high Agency level.

7. The present Fitness Report was not designed to be applicable to clerical personnel. It has received some criticism on this account. Of the 384 reports thus far tabulated, the maximum per cent of checks in the "Not Observed" column is 30. The next highest is 16 per cent, and for most items it is below 10. Apparently, raters are finding it possible to rate a large majority of their subordinates with these items. This is not to say that Section IV could not be improved from the standpoint of its applicability to clerical workers.

8. Experience with fitness reporting has made it clear that raters become confused if changes are made rapidly or on bases so fragile that the changes later are withdrawn. Experience with fitness reporting has also made it clear that the only solid basis on which they can be revised are (1) studies of how raters actually use the items, and (2) questionnaires to determine which kind of items the raters themselves find most acceptable. Studies of both kinds will be undertaken. The slow rate of return of both the questionnaires and the Fitness Reports is delaying these studies. The results recorded above must be considered tentative until a number of Fitness Reports and questionnaires sufficient to warrant a really thorough analysis have been received.

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Assessment and Evaluation Staff

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