AN IMPROVED FORM FOR RATING BY THE ORDER OF MERIT METHOD

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Use of Cards in Order of Merit Ranking.—It is a well known fact among students of mental and social science that to obtain measures of individuals by the so-called "Order of Merit Method," in which names are arranged in order from highest to lowest for the trait consideration, that it is preferable to have the names on individual cards or slips. This contributes to the care and accuracy with which such ranking is done, is more convenient and hence is always advisable. But it is often not practicable to copy names on to cards. Moreover these are cumbersome and not adapted to be easily transported through the mails, which is sometimes necessary. To overcome these disadvantages a special form, which I have called a "Card list" was designed for this purpose. It is printed on heavy paper 9 x 15½ inches, perforated to fold lengthwise in the center. The left-hand half is ruled for entering the list of names to be ranked, such for example, as a class roll. At the left margin are columns for entering the rank number opposite each name. The right-hand half of the form is made up of a continuous row of small separable slips, corresponding in size to the ruling of the opposite side. These are held in place as part of the original sheet until torn apart on the perforation lines.

Method of Using.—The method of use is as follows: The sheet is folded vertically on the center perforation line, a carbon paper is inserted and the names entered on the left-hand side as they would be on any sheet, either typed or in pencil. The carbon copy of each name is thus made on an individual separable slip or miniature card. After the names have been entered the person who is to arrange the names in order of merit, simply tears off the duplicate list of separable names and thus has both the original list (which is preferably alphabetical) and also all the duplicate names on individual miniature cards or slips, ready to be sorted. As designed, the form is cut through (slit) between each slip,—the latter being held in place at both ends until torn on perforation lines. The slips can therefore be almost instantly separated, yet are held in proper place while names are entered.

Figure 1 shows the general appearance of this form after the duplicate names have been torn off. The cut is intended to show the process

When the miniature cards or slips have been placed in their final position, the judge turns to the original list (alphabetical) and writes

FIG. 1

The individual slips may then be re-arranged if other traits are to be judged, otherwise they are merely discarded—and the original list mailed or taken to its destination.

Chief Advantages and Uses.—One of the advantages of such a form lies in its novelty, for it is frequently found that a judge who refuses or is disinclined to write names down in order of merit, will do the ranking when presented with this form. It appeals to him as a sort of game. The secret of this is of course that nearly all the

labor has been eliminated for him. The form appeals particularly to foremen and supervisors of industrial plants. The chief advantage however is in the increased care with which rating is done, as compared with merely writing numbers besides names. The judge is forced to pass judgment upon each individual name as he re-arranges it in his new list. It also gives a wider spread of ranks than is generally obtainable with only a list.

There are still a great many situations in which the order of merit method is the only one applicable, and in which such a form is useful. Among these may be mentioned those cases where experiments in mutual rating for personal traits by employees, supervisors, foremen, inspectors, teachers, etc. are being conducted. In the absence of objective measures of many vocational, and moral traits of an individual the necessity for the best possible methods of ranking is apparent. No contention is made that the latter is as desirable as the former, but since in determining most objective measures, such as vocational tests, and scales,—*Judgment by the order of Merit is the Criterion* by which such tests are established, and since the valuation of many traits of individuals in shop, factory and school are still obtainable only by the ranking method, every effort should be made to raise this to as objective a level as possible.

The "Cardlist" combination Ranking Card herein described was used by the writer Mr. John Slawson in an intensive study of the order of Merit Method as applied to the Rating of teachers,¹ and also by Mr. H. A. Toops in practical tests of shopworkmen in factories and laboratories, in New England.

¹ A study of teacher Rating with special reference to the Order of Merit Method—Stenquist & Slawson—Sureau of Reference, Research and Statistics, Board of Education, New York City.