

One of the problems of prison life is to find constructive activities for the long periods when the prison is closed, and the prisoners are confined to their cells. Experiments are now being undertaken in the development of hobbies to provide interest and activity during these periods to counteract the inertia and the less desirable activities that develop during the long hours of confinement.

When one considers that more than fifty per cent of our prisoners are under 30 years of age, the importance of providing some outlet for their physical energy becomes apparent if health is to be maintained and a sense of responsibility developed. During the past summer competitive games such as soft ball and basket ball have been introduced at our institutions over the weekends and the effect upon discipline and morale has been very noticeable. These activities are encouraged as privileges subject to forfeiture if abused and our experience has demonstrated that the prisoners appreciate their responsibility in seeing that they are carried out with fair play and good conduct. Although the organization and management of the teams was placed in the hands of the convicts themselves, and even the umpires were selected from the prisoners, not a single incident marred the keen interest and good sportmanship displayed. We feel that activities of this kind help to develop that ability to get along with others that is a very important part of good citizenship. Disciplinary problems and complaints about ill health dropped off sharply with the expansion of these outdoor activities. All these rehabilitative activities within the prison are pointed to the day when the prisoner becomes eligible for release and must once more face the problem of adjusting himself and his conduct to life in the free world. All the efforts that have been made by the prisoner himself and by the authorities are likely to come to naught if he is unable to obtain employment and an opportunity to put into practice to his own advantage what he has learned. Not all our prisoners will profit by their period of imprisonment -- we must realize that a considerable number have developed a pattern of behaviour and a mental attitude that is unreceptive to whatever training can be given to them. But there are a large number, some with serious past records, whom the prison authorities believe have the will and the intention of "going straight". For these the important thing is to have a job and a means of support available before their will is weakened and their ability dulled by disappointment. There are now across Canada a number of Prisoner's Aid Societies, many bearing the name of the great English prison reformer John Howard, that are providing that helping hand and that encouragement to prisoners released from our penitentiaries that often makes all the difference between success and failure. In the province of Quebec, La Société d'orientation et réhabilitation sociale in Montreal and La Société de réadaptation sociale in Quebec, are doing splendid work in this field. The Special Placement Division of the National Employment Service is giving special attention to released prisoners. All these organizations are given opportunities for interviewing prisoners prior to their release, and where the prisoner is willing, plans for his re-establishment are worked out in advance with the Classification Officers of the penitentiaries and the representatives of the Societies. The federal government now gives financial assistance to each of the Societies. But their efforts can only be effective if employers generally are willing to give a chance to those who have demonstrated by their attitude and conduct in