

Senator Thompson: That is really what I was endeavouring to ask earlier, but I did not express it as well as you, Mr. Chairman. What are the criteria?

The Deputy Chairman: I have the advantage of being just a watcher.

Mr. Street: The criteria, are set out in page 6 of our brochure, "An Outline of Canada's Parole System for Judges, Magistrates and the Police". The paragraph states:

These are some of the factors that help the Board decide:

- (a) the nature and gravity of the offence, and whether he is a repeater;
- (b) past and present behaviour;
- (c) the personality of the inmate;

Of course, that involves a great deal, such as the presentence report at the time he was committed and any previous record. In addition to that, we would consider any psychological tests, such as IQ and MPI, which were taken in prison. We would have a general assessment of how he behaved in prison and another assessment from all who dealt with him inside and outside prison.

(d) the possibility that on release the parolee would return to crime and the possible effect on society if he did so;

(e) the efforts made by the inmate during his imprisonment to improve himself through education and vocational training and how well they demonstrate his desire to become a good citizen;

(f) whether there is anyone in the community who can—and would—help the inmate on parole;

(g) the inmate's plans and whether they are realistic enough to aid in his ultimate rehabilitation;

(h) what employment the inmate has arranged, or may be able to arrange; steady employment must be maintained if at all possible as one of the most important factors in his rehabilitation;

(i) how well the inmate understands his problem; whether he is aware of what got him into trouble initially and how he can overcome his defects, and, how well he understands his strengths and weaknesses.

That is a general outline of the criteria which we would be interested in knowing. We try to find this out, and we get most of the information from the people who deal directly with them. We have to hear from everybody who deals with him, what the classification officer says about him and his assessment of him, his workshop instructor, how he gets along in his work, whether his behaviour, attitude and conduct are satisfactory, what the psychologist or psychiatrist says about him, personality tests. These are all things that we obtain in almost every case.

Senator Thompson: The fellow who comes from a middle-class background has a better chance than a fellow who comes from a tough economic background.

Mr. Street: He may have more going for him on the outside: more people may be willing to help him; he may have a job arranged more easily. We find that 78 per cent

of those on parole in Canada are working. It would be fair to say that if a man has a lot going for him on the outside, a lot of family and community support, and a job, that might turn the borderline case into a parole. But if he does not have anything like that and is doing well in prison, we would somehow find something for him. Even if a man had nothing going for him within the community, we would do whatever we could, through our own officers and through community resources, to try to get something organized for him. It just makes it a little easier if he can do it himself.

I suppose that a person who comes from a middle- or upper-class background might have a better opportunity in the community. However, if a man has nothing going for him, we will do our best to assist him. We are looking for an indication of a change in attitude. We know what he was like before; we can tell by his previous record what he was like. In all these reports we are looking for an indication of a change of attitude.

It involves no exact science. It is a question of how everybody assesses him, what they think of him, and what he says himself. When the Board members examine him, they obtain a good deal of information. Sometimes they get information about him that perhaps they did not have before.

Senator Thompson: Let us take an extreme case. An inmate of Belsen who adapted and conceded to the horrible conditions would achieve recommendations to the effect that he may get out. You yourself would say that many persons, in order to get out, have to play ball and obtain a good report from the prison staff. If a man has a little bit of spunk he may end up in isolation, which means that he will not get out. In order to help your work, some prisons should be improved a great deal.

Mr. Street: Federal prisons are pretty good. I do not want to over-emphasize just good conduct in prison, because that by itself does not mean much. Some of the worst criminals are the best behaved in prison because they know how to do time and they do not go out of their way to cause trouble and make it difficult for themselves. As you indicated, a youngster who is inclined to be rebellious may not conform to the system too well; but the fact that he did not, may not mean that he cannot be controlled outside. Good conduct by itself is not really that important. It is a matter of assessing everything a man does and everything about him in prison, to try to determine whether he seems to have changed his attitude. There is no exact science about it; it is a matter of assessing people.

I do not know how to express it any better than that. We secure information from everybody who has been in contact with him from the time he first got into trouble until the present day.

Senator Goldenberg: I understand that an inmate may be paroled prior to his normal eligibility date. Is that right?

Mr. Street: Yes, sir.

Senator Goldenberg: What criteria do you use in a case like that? I will be frank. I have in mind the recent case of the kidnapers who were released on parole in Toronto.