

Senator Williams: There is very little Cree spoken in British Columbia, except in the northeastern portion of the province.

Senator Goldenberg: I happen to know British Columbia very well, and the Premier of British Columbia is always complaining that the rest of Canada comes to settle there. Does not the problem of community acceptance create a very serious problem in British Columbia? As you know many people come there from the rest of Canada as transients and this creates problems for people who have been there for some time. The problem of community acceptance is there, and people are placed at a great disadvantage.

Mr. Stevenson: That is right. All ex-inmates have a handicap because they have a criminal record.

Senator Goldenberg: But they have a particular handicap. An inmate from Quebec in a Quebec penitentiary would probably have his family there, but what happens to these other people? Do you reserve your decision?

Mr. Stevenson: If no satisfactory plan can be worked out, then we have to arrive at a denial or a deferral, if more than two years is left on the sentence. We go through hell in coming to decisions of this type, because we often feel that the fellow could benefit from parole and yet there are no resources to help him. I dislike making such decisions.

Senator Buckwold: Is there any validity to what you sometimes read in the newspapers about prisoners wanting to achieve what university students seem to have achieved, that is to become part of the decision-making process of the institutions?

Would it be any improvement in the parole system if, in fact, responsible inmates passed some judgment on their peers in so far as parole is concerned? Do you feel they could be objective?

Mr. Stevenson: I think the inmates know each other very well; they know the phoney's better than we do, but whether they would put themselves in the position of judging another inmate, I do not know.

They try to do this in group counselling and it works in some institutions while failing in others. I believe Matsqui penitentiary is using this method to some extent, but it is difficult to break down the values, and so forth, of the inmate subculture.

Senator Buckwold: You do not feel they could be objective?

Mr. Stevenson: It would be quite difficult.

Senator Thompson: I believe you stated you started hearings at 8 o'clock and sometimes 7.30 in the morning and you go through until 9 o'clock at night. What is the largest number of applicants you have heard in a day?

Mr. Stevenson: I believe 30 applicants is the largest. We average about 15 to 20 a day.

Senator Thompson: That would mean that some of them would spend very little time before you.

Mr. Stevenson: Yes. I do not know what the average is. One of our members, Mr. Maccagno, keeps a record of the length of time an inmate was present before the board, and the length of time the board takes to come to a decision and so forth. He has all of this information covering the last two years. Quite often, senator, we do not finish at 5 o'clock; we sometimes work until 7, 8, or 9 o'clock.

Senator Thompson: But you have had as many as 30 applicants before you in a day, although it is unusual. Now, does that mean that you require more members on the board, or do you need more hearings, or what?

The Deputy Chairman: You may express an opinion, Mr. Stevenson.

Do you find you are overloaded?

Would you care to rephrase the question, Senator Thompson?

Senator Thompson: Well, I will not press it. I have the feeling of it.

The Deputy Chairman: And you have a feeling of the answer, I think, too.

Senator Thompson: Yes.

The Deputy Chairman: Senator Fergusson?

Senator Fergusson: I realize there are a great many more men than there are women in our institutions, Mr. Street, several thousand men as compared to about 87 women, but all reference to parole has been to "the inmate" and to "him" and to the "man". There has been no reference whatsoever to the women inmates.

The Deputy Chairman: The male includes the female.

Senator Fergusson: I do not accept that, Mr. Chairman. That may be the interpretation in some of our statutes, but that is not my interpretation when I am making a speech. Could you tell us how many women inmates have been granted parole in the last year, and how many applied and were refused?

Mr. Street: I will try to get that information for you, Senator Fergusson, if it is available.

The Deputy Chairman: Do you have another question while we are waiting for that answer?

Senator Quart: I will ask a question in the interim.

Mr. Stevenson, you mentioned something about observers. Do you allow observers to be present when you are interviewing an applicant for parole, or are there just the two of you with the prisoner? Do you allow observers in as well as just the two of you with the prisoner?

Mr. Stevenson: Yes.

Senator Quart: What type of observers?

Mr. Stevenson: There may be the psychologist from the institution. In some institutions there are guidance officers and classification officers. Occasionally we are asked by the John Howard Society or the Salvation Army if they