

There is, of course, a parallel here in what has happened in the practice of medicine. In recent years increasing efforts have been made to prevent illness. Vaccination and inoculations against disease, such as poliomyelitis, diphtheria, whooping cough, and yellow fever, have successfully reduced their incidence so that they are no longer the scourges of mankind. A new approach toward criminology might well meet with similar success.

The root cause of violent crime, however, must be understood before feasible methods of prevention can be recommended. Many theories have been deduced and much has been written about this subject. Different, often contradictory, points of view have been expressed by specialists in a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, psychiatry, criminology, psychology and sociology. Each has, of course, added a part to the sum total of knowledge by which the origins of criminal behaviour may eventually be explained.

Considerable research has been done into the causes of adult criminality, of juvenile delinquency and the problems of crime in society generally. Until recently one very important area of research has been left largely unexplored, namely, genetic, prenatal and perinatal influences and the experiences of early infancy and childhood that may be root causes of the development of criminal behaviour later in life.

What are the influences in the life of a young child which will so affect the course of his development that he will grow up to be aggressive, antisocial or a violent criminal? How is he influenced by the environment in which he lives? Is there some inherited vulnerability to criminal behaviour? Are the reasons basically social, or are they psychological, emotional or physical? Whatever the reasons may be, what can be done to alter the anticipated development of such a child? These were some of the questions which the Committee asked during the enquiry. Specifically, it has explored those early childhood experiences which might be causes of criminal behaviour and has considered what steps might be taken to change such harmful circumstances in early life.

In pursuing its investigations the Committee has relied on the testimony of expert witnesses.

At the commencement of the enquiry, requests for relevant information were sent across Canada to appropriate provincial government departments, to heads of university faculties of medicine, psychology, criminology, social sciences, and interdisciplinary studies, to research institutes, professional associations, and to organizations and institutions concerned with child care and education. The overwhelming response to these enquiries has revealed the depth of concern in Canada for the well-being of its very young citizens. In addition to the wealth of information obtained in this manner, further background information on the subjects involved was provided by the Library of Parliament through an extensive literature search for relevant material published during the past seven years. A great deal of information from international sources has thus been considered. In preparing the final report,