

c. Advantages of Community Service Orders

There are many advantages for the offender in the community service program. They include the possibilities for new relationships, new learning and job training, and the chance to develop good work habits and to make constructive use of time. There is also an important economic advantage for the taxpayer when community service is used as a true alternative to incarceration, rather than as an "add on" to some other community sanction which would have been selected by the judge instead of imprisonment. Community service punishes offenders, in that their free time is restricted, as well as offering them a chance to reform themselves.

From the beginning, this sentence has enjoyed a wide measure of support both from the public and people involved in the criminal justice system. Over the years, it has attracted little controversy. Experience in British Columbia and in Ontario bears out reports that community service appears to be reasonably successful wherever it is carried on.⁶

Research in British Columbia in 1981 indicated that the large majority of offenders sentenced to community service (CS) felt that they were getting something out of the program, that their work was appreciated, "that CS will help them stay out of trouble, and that they are paying back the community for having committed an offence". It was found that the attitudes of offenders were changed through participation in community service and that, regardless of type of offence, the offenders with the most positive attitudes were those who had completed the greatest number of hours of service.

In Ontario, increasing use has been made in recent years of community service orders for people convicted of a wide range of offences. The Correctional Services Minister of Ontario stated in November 1984 that 20 percent of offenders sentenced to do community work actually had done more than ordered, staying on either to finish a job or becoming personally involved in volunteer efforts. In addition, it has been found that this work experience has led to subsequent job opportunities for some individuals.

d. Relationship of Community Service to Sentencing Goals

Community service does not incapacitate the offender to any serious degree. Although it is to an extent punitive, it is not designed as a form of retribution or intended to cause suffering. Rehabilitation of the person