

the by-line of Alfred Friendly. The headline reads, "British Plan Substitute for Jail". I have no intention of reading the entire article, but the first paragraph reads:

The British government proposed last week its first experiment in treatment of petty criminal offenders by sentencing them to community service work instead of jail.

Would that proposal appeal to you?

**Mr. Street:** Yes, it would very much. As I indicated in my opening remarks, I feel we should have more community service work programs and use the prison only as a last resort. I feel we need more probation, more community work programs, and as the British have, more detention homes because, as we have said, 65 per cent of those in prison are not dangerous. I am certainly in favour of things such as that.

**Senator Thompson:** How do you determine that 65 per cent are not dangerous? I realize that this is a human aspect, but you obtain reports from psychiatrists and others. How scientific is this?

**Mr. Street:** I meant that most of the 65 per cent commit property offences rather than offences against the person. They are not offences of violence. There is no violence in the record. It is break, entry and theft, simple theft, fraud, and offences such as possession of stolen goods. They comprise the majority of inmates, and I say they are not dangerous in the sense that they are not likely to offer violence or assault anyone.

**Senator Thompson:** I am really inquiring as to how you assess a person for parole. What factors do you consider? Does the psychiatrist's report carry more weight with you than the fact that he could gain employment?

**Mr. Street:** We consider many, many factors, as set out in our brief. If the man is dangerous, naturally we are more careful. If he has a mental illness or psychiatric problem, we consult a psychiatrist, although I think it is fair to say only 10 or 15 per cent have such problems and need psychiatric treatment. In such cases, we certainly consult a psychiatrist. Then, if it is a serious case we form a panel of three psychiatrists from outside, in addition to the prison psychiatrist, and obtain their opinion. If any psychiatrist told us a certain individual is dangerous, naturally we would not be likely to parole him.

**Senator Thompson:** I am sorry to interrupt, but do you have the assistance of such a panel of psychiatrists in every province?

**Mr. Street:** Yes, and we would certainly obtain it in every murder case or in the case of a dangerous sexual offender. We will not parole a man until we do have this report. We hire these extra psychiatrists ourselves, and we always have access to a psychiatrist in the prison system. Does that answer your question, senator?

**Senator Thompson:** It does to a degree, Mr. Street. I think, however, that it is a very important area in which to reassure the public. We are developing new psychological tools and so on, and it is my opinion that we have over-

emphasized the diagnostic abilities of some psychiatrists. One will act for the defence and one for the prosecution, and some of their reports, in my opinion, are very vague in order to guard themselves, and you are left to take the responsibility. They weasel out of it. I am not that fond of the "*psychiatric forte*", but if I were newly appointed to the Parole Board, could you give me help by indicating the characteristics and other important aspects in the assessment of a person's entitlement to parole? Do you do that?

**Mr. Street:** Yes, we do. When we have occasion to consult a panel of psychiatrists we have a list of questions to put to them. We try to pin them down as much as possible but, as you know, some of them do not pin down as easily as we would like. Naturally we have our own opinions of different psychiatrists as to who are good and who are not so good. We once had a certain amount of difficulty in obtaining unequivocal reports from certain psychiatrists. Now we know those upon whom we can depend. As you know, it is not an exact science, but we give them a list of questions and ask for answers.

Especially in potentially dangerous cases, murder and if there are psychiatric problems involved, we like to send them to a mental hospital for a month or two for observation. Then the panel of psychiatrists, which may be more than but is at least three, would have occasion to treat and observe the case for 30 or 60 days and provide a case conference report and a separate report from each psychiatrist, which we would then consider. In a case of an ordinary type of offender with a psychiatric problem which leaves us unsatisfied, in addition to the psychiatric report from the prison we would obtain three from outside.

**Senator Goldenberg:** Mr. Street, you have spoken of murder two or three times. Do you have different policies for different types of offences?

**Mr. Street:** In this sense we do. If it is murder, he has to serve seven or ten years, and then the case goes to Cabinet.

**Senator Goldenberg:** Excuse me, but that was not what I had in mind. I meant, in determining whether a man should go on parole, do you have one policy governing sex offenders, another for drug offences, and so on, or do you apply the same general principles?

**Mr. Street:** I would say we apply the same general principles in all cases, except with dangerous and sex offenders and especially dangerous sex offenders. We are more careful with such cases than we would be with the property type offender. We do not have any different stated policy with respect to different types of offences, except in a general way. If they are dangerous, we are much more careful; and if there are psychiatric problems we obtain psychiatric opinions. Then it is a case of judging each individual case according to the individual merits and circumstances and the information that we have as to what is going on in the community, the same as all the others.

**The Deputy Chairman:** May I suggest that it would be helpful at this point if the witness were asked—I would sooner not do it—what criteria are used in determining whether a person does or does not receive parole? Will a member of the committee volunteer to do that, please?