The present unsatisfactory state of data for public accounting purposes has been well described as follows:

> "...it has to be said that most of the data production in the administration of justice has given headaches to specialists who have tried to cull information from them and the data are certainly inaccessible to public understanding. If one looks at accounts derived from these data by even some highly skilled specialist one often shudders. It therefore comes as no surprise that whenever contentious issues arise, some of the data create more confusion than clarity. One can think of a number of crime trend studies which do not take into account the variation in completeness of reporting, and some issues such as capital punishment and parole in which the real picture is more hidden than revealed. One cannot complain about public attitudes towards crime and criminals as long as the public has no meaningful access to information it can understand and is at the mercy of ideologists and vested interests. Anxiety mongers have already succeeded in destroying a good part of the urban scene in the United States, a lesson which we must heed. There is good reason to believe that an increase in serious crime did not precede, but followed, the anxiety waves. If there is no clear and rational accounting system, then there is no bulwark against such anxiety waves.
>
> One could conceive that national statistical accounts in this area could be produced in a way which would give simple graphic presentations understandable to school children. Crime, after all, is an interesting story and this story can be told even with data. It is also a phenomenon of great general concern, and accounts therefore should have extensive general distribution.[12]

Success/Failure Rate

The parole success or failure rate was perhaps the subject most frequently discussed at our public hearings and in the briefs submitted. We find that it was misunderstood and, as a concept, misused.

Over the years, the National Parole Board has published two different kinds of rates. It does not really matter whether one refers to failure or success rates since they are opposite sides of the same coin. If a program fails in five per cent of the cases it can usually be said to succeed in ninety-five per cent. The parole failure rate (FR) was established by the number of parole violations (PV) divided by the number of paroles granted (PG) multiplied by 100, i.e., $\frac{PV}{PG} \times 100 = FR$. A success rate (SR) would use the number of successfully completed paroles (PC) instead of parole violations (PV), i.e., $\frac{PV}{PG} \times 100 = SR$. At the beginning of the National Parole Board operations, the rate was an annual rate which included only parole violations (PV) and paroles granted (PG) in a given year. More recently, the rate has been based on the number of parole violations (PV) and paroles granted (PG) since the beginning of the Board's operations.

In both cases, the Board defined parole violations as those cases where the offender breached conditions of parole (revocation) or, committed, while still on parole, an indictable offence punishable by two years or more in detention (forfeiture).