

Private Members' Business

1,446 more inmates completed grade eight, with the objective being 1,200.

During the first two years of this initiative the CSC has achieved 118 per cent of its objective. The third year appears to have started well since roughly 80 per cent of the over-all objective had been obtained by the end of the second quarter. The CSC certainly hopes to be able to meet its over-all objective.

To achieve this end, the CSC budgeted 100 per cent more in 1987-88 than in 1986-87 for basic adult education, an increase from \$2.5 million to \$5 million. In 1988-89 the over-all budget for adult basic education was roughly \$6.4 million. I should stress that the CSC maintained all the other educational programs it offers to federal inmates including secondary, post-secondary and college education programs. Vocational training also continues to be a crucial component of the program offered since it allows inmates to learn a craft or skill directly.

The service has also established standard mandatory testing to identify functionally illiterate offenders and thus be better able to integrate them into the adult basic education program. Since commencement of the initiative close to 8,000 inmates entering the correctional system have undergone testing. To date, about 65 per cent have scored at lower than the completed grade eight level. The rate of refusal—and I think it is important to say “refusal” because my hon. friend said that this program was mandatory—to undergo testing has decreased from 16 per cent to 8 per cent in two years. The tests used are currently under revision in order to improve further the service's effectiveness at identifying illiterate inmates.

During the course of 1988-89 the correctional service set up a new system to manage data on inmate education, thus enabling the service to monitor the fulfilment of its objectives even more closely. For example, it was noted, with the help of this new system, that the average national success rate in relation to the number of inmates registered dropped from 2.99 in March of 1988 to 2.59 in April of 1989, a significant drop.

This demonstrates better case management and more careful follow-up of students who withdraw or fail. In fact the service has set in motion an entire process aimed

at assisting these students with problems and encouraging them to return to the program by modifying for them the traditional approach to teaching. The cost per successful case has decreased from \$4,650 in 1987-88 to \$4,189 in 1988-89. This accomplishment greatly surpasses the initial objective of \$5,000 per case.

Correctional Service Canada now uses innovative teaching methods to help inmates surmount perceptual problems and identified learning disabilities. The service has expanded the adult basic education program and will continue to make improvements to increase participation and effectiveness. Also, inmate involvement in this program must henceforth be taken into account when considering the inmate for certain jobs in the institution. In some cases the inmate's participation is a condition for obtaining special privileges within the institution.

Training sessions on learning disabilities have been offered to teaching staff in order to improve their ability to assist inmates with these problems. All staff have been made aware of the importance of basic education in order that a concerted movement be established throughout the correctional service to combat the problem of illiteracy.

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In addition to ensuring that adult basic education programs are accredited, the service has adopted a multitude of techniques and methods aimed at facilitating adult learning. These include small group or individual instruction if necessary, computer assisted teaching, the use of tutors from within the prison population, as well as more effective use of community volunteers. My hon. friend spoke about the use of peers and community volunteers, integration with other life skills programs and follow-up. I want to point out to my hon. friend that these are all things that are being done. In fact training programs have been given to these volunteers in some regions.

Adult basic education does much more than teach people the three r's. It provides offenders with the opportunity to feel better about themselves and experience personal growth, which will assist them when they are released. As with the general public, however, education of offenders does not end with grade eight completion. On the contrary, offenders who successfully complete the adult education program are encouraged to