

able to conclude that the provision of reasonably complete and simple-to-use information cannot itself promote more consistent sentencing decisions.)

One limitation on the data base is that, at present, it includes only British Columbia cases. Given the absence of sentencing appeals at the Supreme Court of Canada, sentencing policy is essentially set by provincial courts of appeal. Depending on how easy it is to retrieve existing data from provincial courts and other trial court registries, the system could be expanded to include all Canadian sentencing jurisdictions. Implementation of the Committee's previous recommendation requiring judges to state reasons for sentences could facilitate compilation of relevant sentencing information for the evolution of a more sophisticated national sentencing data base.

Moreover, the system is currently able to sort cases in relation only to a few standardized offender characteristics — gender, age range, marital status, and presence or absence of a criminal record. Determining an appropriate sentence by comparing it with other similar cases may require more sophisticated data entry, sorting and retrieval mechanisms. To reduce unwarranted disparity effectively, judges may need to know more about the nature of the criminal record, circumstances related to the offence and offender characteristics, other than gender, age, and marital status, as well as what community sanctions have been used in various circumstances. The existing system does not permit retrieval of such information. In fact, in many trial decisions, because of the absence of reasons, such information is not readily available.

A different approach has been developed by Dr. Doob and Norman Park, president of Norpark Computer Design, Inc., who submitted information to the Committee. They contend that, even with sentencing guidelines, judges need information about the use of the ranges of sentences that fall within the guidelines and about the kinds of cases that fall outside the ranges, along with the reasons for departures.

Doob and Park, in conjunction with sentencing judges, developed a data collection sheet on which sentencing judges check off the relevant attribute of sex offender and offence characteristics (all but one of which are related to the Committee's proposed principles to be considered in the determination of an appropriate sentence):

- ° criminal record (i.e., none, inconsequential or unrelated;
some but not serious; substantial);