

Case preparation procedures vary for cases of inmates serving penitentiary sentences and those serving sentences in other prisons. This presentation will therefore deal first with the procedures in penitentiary cases, following which the differences between the two will be stated.

Penitentiary Cases

A case file is opened in the district office and at headquarters upon receipt of the penitentiary admission document. The identifying information on this form enables us to initiate our requests for reports that do not come to us automatically.

The R.C.M. Police Fingerprint Section record is forwarded to us automatically by that force in each case. This document gives a history of the individual's criminal record.

Certain police forces supply us automatically with reports outlining the circumstances of the offence and other details surrounding the commission of the offence. In all other cases, we request reports from the investigating force. The Board places great stress on having an official version of the offence. The necessity for police reports becomes clear when it is realized that the inmate (like all humans) generally wishes to place himself in the best possible light and is therefore likely to repress certain of the facts surrounding the commission of the offence.

It is a well known fact that police forces will, from time to time, express their displeasure with the activities of the Parole Board. It should be made clear, however, that this fact in no way detracts from the further fact that the reports of individual police officers written with respect to individual offenders are remarkable in their objectivity.

Certain types of cases involve additional enquiries. For example, in cases involving drugs, we request a report from the Division of Narcotic Control, Department of National Health and Welfare and enquiries are made of the Department of Manpower and Immigration with respect to the citizenship status of individuals who may be deportable. Pre-sentence reports are available to us in those cases in which they have been conducted by the provincial probation services.

The inmate is advised in writing of his parole eligibility date and if interested in parole, he is invited to forward his application five months in advance of that date (nine months in advance in life sentences).

Receipt of the inmate's application initiates additional reports by the institutional staff. (At this point, however, we already have on file a social history report from the institution which was completed shortly after admission.) The report at the time of the inmate's application is, in large measure, drawn up by institutional classification officers, but it incorporates reports or comments from staff members who are in frequent contact with the inmate. Depending on the nature of the case, there may be reports from either a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or both. Essentially, the institutional reports tell us of his attitudes, what the inmate has accomplished in the institution, what he has achieved during his sentence by way of training, treatment, etc.

Following receipt of this report, the representative of the Parole Board interviews the inmate. During this interview, the inmate's release plans are discussed in depth, contacts will frequently be made with institutional personnel for additional information and clarification, and in certain cases, a case conference may be held with institutional personnel.

Once the assessment of the individual is completed, the district representative will direct a request for a community assessment. Each district representative is responsible for community assessments within his own district boundaries. Consequently, the file, with appropriate referral material (copies of the various interview reports indicated above), is directed to the office of destination, as required. This office will either complete the investigation or refer the case to the appropriate provincial or private after-care agency in their district.

The purpose of the community assessment is to make in-depth enquiries in the community to determine that aspect of the feasibility of releasing the inmate on parole. The investigation determines the attitude of the family and the community in general toward the applicant. It confirms the inmate's stated release plans in terms of offers of employment, where he intends to live and the willingness of the family and community to assist the applicant with his rehabilitation plans. While the emphasis is on the immediate family constellation, corollary interviews may be held with other relatives, potential employers, police, etc.

Essentially, there are two assessments made. The first of these is the assessment of the man in the institution and the second is the assessment of the adequacy of the community resources to receive him. Changes in the community situation often necessitate a further interview by the parole officer and occasionally, this results in a completely new release plan being formulated. This information is normally available in Ottawa to the Panel Members of the Board who will eventually interview the inmate in the institution.

The panel hearings take place either one or two months in advance of the inmate's eligibility. At the time of the Panel hearing, the institutional officer and the parole officer who interviewed the inmate are present and are able, at that time, to present the Board with up-to-date information about the inmate's situation and plans.

Prior to cases being presented to the Board for review at headquarters, there is a review by the headquarters staff to ensure the presence and adequacy of all material required for the Board review. A Special Categories Section carries out an intensive review with respect to a selected category of cases. These cases include Dangerous Sexual Offenders, Habitual Criminals, Doukhobors, Life cases and any other case designated as "special".

Because of the nature of the cases, the procedures in processing them in the district offices are more elaborate. Before recommending for parole, there are normally case conferences involving the institutional psychiatrist, psychologist, classification officer, a representative of the National Parole Service and other institution officials, i.e., the prison chaplain and training officers who are in daily