

lesser. Where, however, a person has been convicted of murder, the minimum period, since 1967, that an inmate must serve in prison is 10 years and in addition the release on parole must be approved by the Governor in Council.

II—RELATION OF PAROLE TO SENTENCE PASSED BY THE COURT

The Board is not concerned with the propriety of the conviction or the length of the sentence.

From time to time, the opinion has been expressed that the operation of the parole system constitutes, in some manner, an abrogation or interference with the rights and duties of judges in imposing sentences. Fortunately, most judges recognize that the Parole Act is an integral part of our system for the administration of criminal justice and are pleased to co-operate with the Parole Board.

In passing sentence, judges are aware of the possibility of release on parole in accordance with provisions of the Parole Act. Many judges taking cognizance of this fact have adopted the practice of making known to the Parole Board their views on the desirability of parole as a tool in rehabilitation in particular cases. Such recommendations are most heartily welcomed by the Parole Board whether they support or oppose parole.

Recommendations from judges are given the most serious consideration when the Board reviews applications for parole. Any assistance that the judge can give to the Board which will help it in arriving at its decision is greatly appreciated. We would encourage judges to continue this practice whenever they feel that there are circumstances which should be brought to the attention of the Parole Board.

Parole is a means by which an inmate who gives definite indication of his intention to reform, can be released from prison so that he can serve the balance of his sentence at large in society, under supervision and surveillance, subject to restrictions and conditions designed for the protection of the public and his own welfare.

III—BOARD POLICY IN PAROLE ADMINISTRATION

The dual purpose of parole is the rehabilitation of the offender and the protection of society. It is a means of assisting him to become a useful, law-abiding citizen, while at the same time ensuring that he does not misbehave or return to crime.

The possibility of parole provides a strong incentive to an inmate to gain maximum benefit from the prison facilities and to change his attitude towards crime. It also encourages him to maintain contact with the outside world and to plan realistically for his future. It tends to discourage association with the hard-core criminals and the anti-administration groups in prison, and gives him something to hope and strive for.

There are over 7,000 men in our federal prisons serving sentences of 2 years or more. Over 80% of these men have been in prison before, and a good many have been there many times.

There are, in addition, some 15,000 persons incarcerated in provincial jails and correctional institutions serving

sentences of up to 2 years. In many cases, because of lack of facilities and trained staff or because of the short duration of the sentence, many of these institutions lack training programs or have developed very limited opportunities to waste their time in idleness. They gain no useful experience but are instead subjected to harmful effects from associating with other criminal offenders.

The purpose of a realistic correctional program is to return criminal offenders to society as law-abiding citizens who are willing to accept responsibilities as members of the community. This cannot be accomplished by locking them up away from society and keeping them in prison where they have no responsibilities.

The Parole Board recognizes that there are criminals who have selected crime as a way of life or who are dangerous and pose a serious threat to public safety if they are permitted to be at large. Such persons must be controlled and this can be done adequately only by a prison sentence. Some suffer from mental illness and should be sentenced for treatment in psychiatric institutions. Since two-thirds or more of the people in prison are not dangerous or vicious or violent, most of them could be controlled and treated in the community and parole is one of the means by which this can be accomplished.

Treatment and training within the institution is a vital part of the reformation and rehabilitation process. Parole is a continuation of this program on the outside. The function of the Parole Board is to select those inmates who give some indication that they intend to reform and assist them in doing so, by the grant of a parole. We are looking for a distinct change in attitude and if we do not think that there is at least a reasonable chance they will reform, they are not considered.

Granting parole is not a question of being unduly sympathetic to criminals and their problems but simply a realistic understanding and appreciation of the problems and an attempt to effect a sensible solution in each case. Parole is not a matter of pampering persons who have been sentenced to prison but rather a means for helping those who want to help themselves and of giving them an opportunity to reform if, in the opinion of the Board, the attitude of the inmate and his response to training programs within the institution provide a reasonable expectation that he is sincere in his intention to reform and merits the opportunity to return to the community before the expiry of his sentence.

IV—PROCEDURES PRECEDING BOARD DECISION

The decision of the Board to grant parole is not taken lightly. The Board recognizes the gravity of this decision and the serious consequences which may follow if a person released on parole turns once again to criminal activity. A great deal of careful preparation is made to obtain information and opinions which will assist the Board in arriving at its decision.

Case preparation encompasses all activity prior to the inmate's release on parole or mandatory supervision. It includes the gathering of reports from several sources, interviews, analysis of all pertinent data available and a summary and recommendation for consideration by the Board.