

PAROLE STATISTICS

This Report has made little use of statistics on parole because the information is inadequate. It is not reliable enough to give even accurate head counts. It neither permits accurate statistical descriptions, nor meaningful assessments of various programs. Parole statistics are not alone in this sorry state. Statistical information on other programs such as remission, probation following imprisonment, temporary absence, etc., is either non-existent or almost meaningless.

A number of illustrations will demonstrate what we have said. First, the information about parole denials, parole releases and parole terminations for 1971 is contained in the National Parole Board publication *Statistics 1971, Part I, Parole Clientele Statistics*. In Tables 2.1, 2.4 and 2.6, the total number of short paroles is never the same. Secondly, in the category of parole release where no supervision is involved, i.e., short parole, parole for deportation and parole for voluntary departure, the total number reported is 166 in Table 2.1, 162 in Table 2.3 and 164 in Table 2.5. There is no justification for these differences and no explanations are given.

If one attempts to determine what happened to a certain category of offenders on parole, statistics do not help. The frequently published failure rate is established on the basis of the number of paroled inmates who are returned to detention for parole violations compared with the number released on parole in a given year. The numbers refer to all categories of offenders who were granted parole and all those who violated their parole during the year. Consequently, no calculation can be made for specific categories. For example, offenders convicted of murder released on parole during 1971 are fewer in number than those in the same category who terminated their paroles.¹ There is no way of measuring their success rate, but this would be more meaningful than an overall rate which combines all categories, i.e., the most serious offender and petty offenders. Parole supervision cannot be equally successful with all categories of offenders and it would be valuable to have statistics to indicate how well certain categories of offenders respond to parole supervision. Information on murderers who have been released on parole would have been useful in the recent debate on capital punishment.

Parole legislation requires that a person ordinarily serve one-third of his term of imprisonment before parole may be granted. The parole authority has the power to make exceptions, in special circumstances, to this general rule. Nowhere in the parole statistics is there any report on the number who have been released at one-third of the time served nor is there any information on the number released by exception and the reasons for such exceptions. Parole statistics, for some unexplained reason, report on those who, when released, have completed less than thirty-five per cent of the time served. In 1971, this category constituted more than thirty-five per cent of the 5126 releases, but there is no information about the exceptions, that is, those released before normal eligibility, or about ordinary parole releases at one-third of sentence.²

Parole Clientele Statistics offers other unusual statements. For example, in 1971, there was one life sentence and one preventive detention sentence which were terminated