

The Daubney report of the House of Commons, which was recently made public, said:

One reason why Native offenders are disproportionately represented in the prison population is that too many of them are being unnecessarily sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

The fact is that the rate of growth of the native offender population has exceeded that of the general population in every year since 1982. That is why a study, reviewing the admissions of the Saskatchewan corrections system in 1976-77, appropriately entitled "Locking Up Indians in Saskatchewan", contains findings that should shock the conscience of everyone in Canada. In comparison to male non-natives, male treaty Indians are 25 times more likely to be admitted to a provincial correctional centre, while non-status Indians or Métis are eight times more likely to be admitted. If only that part of the population over 15 years of age is considered, then male treaty Indians are 37 times more likely to be admitted, while male non-status Indians are 12 times more likely to be admitted. For women, the figures are even more extreme. A treaty Indian woman is 131 times more likely to be admitted than a non-status Métis woman; and 28 times more likely than a white.

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The Saskatchewan study brings home the implications of its findings by indicating that a treaty Indian boy turning 16 in 1976 had a 70 per cent chance of at least one stay in prison by age 25. The corresponding figure for a non-status Métis was 34 per cent; for a non-native in Saskatchewan it was only 8 per cent. Put another way, this means that in Saskatchewan, for young native men, prison has become the promise of a just society which high school and college represents to the rest of us.

Placed in an historical context, the prison has become, for many young native people, the contemporary equivalent of what the Indian residential school represented to his parents.

Honourable senators, three reports with respect to custodial treatment of inmates have been released recently. The Daubney Committee report to which I have just referred was released in 1988; it was a report of the House of Commons Committee on Justice and Solicitor General. The Canadian Bar Association report, "Locking Up Natives in Canada", was released in June of 1988. We also have the report of the Solicitor General's Task Force on the Reintegration of Aboriginal Offenders, which was released in March 1989. All three reports are indictments of our society as they highlight the vicious treatment the native is called upon to endure when he becomes involved with the criminal justice system in Canada.

Honourable senators, those are not the first reports, although, hopefully, they will be the last. However, I know they will not be. In reading the Solicitor General's report my attention was caught by some interesting phrases. They rang a bell that caused me to go back and reread a 1974 report of a Senate committee, chaired by Senator Goldenberg, that inves-

tigated parole in Canada. That report contained a section on the native in custody. It was interesting to find that in 1974 the committee chaired by Senator Goldenberg wrote that the native population in correctional institutions was disproportionately high in that they constituted 8 per cent of the total penitentiary population. The minister's task force, which conducted its study 15 years later, stated that, although they comprised 2.5 per cent of Canada's population, approximately 9 per cent of federally incarcerated inmates were aboriginal people. In 15 years there has been no improvement. It is worse. The Solicitor General proclaims his "grave concern" for the native in custody and proclaims the fact that they have been "working successfully" at the problem over the years. Yet the situation is worse today than it was when Senator Goldenberg investigated the situation in 1974.

In 1974 the committee chaired by Senator Goldenberg also found, with respect to programs in institutions, that in some instances programs should be orientated to the cultural, social and economic needs of the offenders. In 1989 the Solicitor General has said that the correctional system should make available programs that are particularly suited to serving the spiritual and cultural needs of the aboriginal offender. He says that we must ensure that our programs and processes are sensitive to the special needs of these offenders. That is exactly what Senator Goldenberg's committee found 15 years before.

In 1974 the Senate committee also found that more native workers would be valuable in determining realistic alternatives for native offenders and that the correctional authority should employ native workers in all phases of the correctional process. In 1989 the Solicitor General states, "Further action is required to increase the number of aboriginal employees." The Daubney Committee report, in 1988, stated that those who deliver these programs often come from non-native backgrounds, with the result that there are oftentimes cross-cultural difficulties and therefore native instructors and teachers should be hired to deliver programs to native people. The committee chaired by Senator Goldenberg identified those problems back in 1974. Our programs at that time were irrelevant to the native offender. They were "our" solutions to "our" problems. They were not "his" solutions to "his" problems and he could not understand them. In 1974 we recommended that more natives be brought into the correctional process. The Solicitor General with his "great concern" offers the same recommendation in 1989 and proclaims to the world that he has been "working successfully" at the problem.

The fact is that he has the gall to take credit for modest progress with respect to native spirituality. Native spirituality has been asked for by the natives for as long as I can remember. I imagine that for 50 years they have been asking for their own spirituality in institutions. They were told to go to the Roman Catholic priest or to the Protestant minister; that that would meet their needs. Through continued asking or through continued appeal to the authorities they were finally granted their unique spirituality program about three years ago. That was "their" request for "their" problem. It has had very positive results. However, the Solicitor General now takes