

failure rate within reasonable limits. We watch this carefully every week. Any member of my staff will tell you that I watch the statistics all the time. In any event, I still say that it is within very reasonable limits.

To answer your question about panels, we started this because we think it is more satisfactory for the members actually to see and talk to the person to whom they are considering granting parole. I am not suggesting that they necessarily in all cases or in most cases are able to make a more intelligent decision than they would from reading the carefully prepared assessment or reports in the file. But it is beneficial to talk to the inmate.

Senator Fergusson: Someone interviewed them before?

Mr. Street: Yes, they are always interviewed.

Senator Fergusson: Someone from your office?

Mr. Street: Yes. The case is still prepared in the same way. He is interviewed by all concerned, especially the regional officers in the field, under the direction of Mr. Carabine, and they give us their assessments, the same as they did when we dealt with the files here. The only thing that is added is that now the Parole Board can see them and they are able to ask questions and bring out things that they like to and form their own assessment—although I think they could make a decision on the file, too.

It seems to me the most important feature of it is that the inmate has an opportunity to make his pitch, as it were, to those who are actually going to decide. It is much more gratifying and satisfying for him to appear and state his own case and have his day in court, as it were.

As far as the decision is concerned, I do not think it matters too much, if you are going to give him a parole, whether you give it to him in that manner or hand it to him on a platter by two members of the board, or send it through the mail. The most important thing of all, apart from the gratifying aspect of seeing the inmate and the inmate seeing us, is that if he does not get a parole he is told why and he knows exactly why. He does not have to guess or speculate any more, and they are able to give him some guidance and advice about it. Besides this, it keeps our members, in their travelling, not only in touch with the prisoners, which is important, but with all the federal institutions. It is onerous for them, but they try to keep in touch with the institutions and the institution heads, and they are able to discuss and meet classification officers, psychologists, psychiatrists, wardens and so on, and the result of it has been very gratifying, although it is very strenuous and they have to travel much of the time.

Senator Fergusson: And you feel it was a very worthwhile decision?

Mr. Street: Yes, I do, senator, and it has been very favourably received by, as I say, almost everyone, and I do not know of any unfavourable comment. Everyone likes it—the prisoners and the institutions.

Senator Fergusson: The prisoners certainly would prefer to talk to someone from the Board, than talk to the staff.

Mr. Street: Yes, and it is less impersonal.

Senator Quart: This is a supplementary question, before the subject changes. Prior to the interviews with the travelling panel that you now have, it was a responsibility of the regional parole officer, was it not, to interview the inmates regarding parole?

Mr. Street: Yes. It still is.

Senator Quart: Does that officer still do it?

Mr. Street: Yes, he still does it in the same way, and, in fact, he is at the panel hearing with them, to give them detailed information.

Senator Quart: I did not realize it was the regional officer.

Mr. Street: The only change is that the Board interviews and makes the decision on the spot.

Senator Quart: Yes.

Mr. Street: The regional officer still interviews them throughout the whole report. Incidentally, as you know, the Ouimet Committee recommended this use of panels, but we started it before their report was in.

Senator Quart: I might just add that having travelled, as Senator Fergusson knows, across Canada to hearings held by the Committee on Poverty and by the Committee on the Constitution, the travelling across the country is not so pleasurable as the public think.

Mr. Street: No, it is not.

Senator Quart: You have not time to change your mind before you have to do it in another place, sometimes.

The Deputy Chairman: I am not sure, senator, that that is completely relevant, but we will accept it, anyway.

Senator Quart: I know, but I always go outside the lines.

Senator Fergusson: This is a question I particularly want to ask. On the amount of remuneration you give to agencies and provinces, when you changed from giving them an annual grant to paying them by the case, was this decision made on the basis that you could not afford to pay them as much? For instance, I know of one agency, the Elizabeth Fry Society, which does work for you. They do not have very many cases but they do good work, and I think they now get \$30 per person; and they have to give about six hours a month for each one of those parolees. They find they are much worse off than they were when they got an annual grant. I wonder if you discussed this with the agencies that work for you, before you changed the method.

Mr. Street: Yes, we did.

Senator Fergusson: You did? And did they prefer that?

Mr. Street: Yes.

Senator Fergusson: I can see how a large association works, where they have a whole lot of cases.

Mr. Street: It certainly was discussed. In fact, Mr. Miller and two other members from the department travelled all across the country and discussed it in some detail with all the agencies involved. It is unfortunate if there is an