

Everything is not perfect, but we do the best we can with what we have.

Senator Thompson: I believe you deliver lectures at RCMP schools. Do other key organizations submit invitations to speak which must be declined because of insufficient staff?

Mr. Street: I cannot manage alone, but we encourage our officers to make speeches and meet people. I regard attendance at meetings of judges, magistrates and police chiefs as a high priority and attend whenever I am invited.

Senator Thompson: Therefore, the time of a parole officer is not spent only in supervision of a case load, a large part of it is devoted to community interpretation of his role?

Mr. Street: Very much so. One of his important functions is to keep in touch with judges, magistrates and police forces in his area. He also maintains contact with members of the staff of the Attorney General and the prisons.

In a few years we hope to appoint regional directors. We will then have officers available for increased liaison and public relations. Although they are all encouraged to do that now, sometimes it is difficult for them to do it as well as we think it should be done.

Senator Thompson: Could you express an approximation of the proportion of time you consider that an officer should spend on the public relations role in comparison with the remainder of his duties in relation to parolees?

Mr. Street: I could only estimate and guess at least 25 per cent. Unfortunately, he becomes snowed under with requests for parole and supervision and is unable to do as much as he or we think he should. It varies from one office to another, so I could not say.

Senator Thompson: This would become an important part of the responsibilities of a regional officer?

Mr. Street: Yes, it would. Some of our offices are very big now, with 14 men. We find it necessary to appoint a man just for office administration, so that the chief officer has more time for liaison and public relations.

Senator Hastings: I would like to turn, Mr. Street, to parole revocation and forfeiture. I will refrain from expressing an opinion in this regard, but ask quietly and simply: Would you explain the terms "revocation" and "forfeiture" and the procedure used with respect to the revocation of a parole?

Mr. Street: Revocation simply means that parole can be terminated by action of the board because the man failed to abide by the conditions of his parole, or he may have committed a minor offence. If that happens, the parole officer, or whoever supervises, reports to us that the man had violated the conditions of his parole in one way—it is usually in more than one way—and the board then decides whether to revoke his parole. It is done by action of the board.

Forfeiture occurs automatically. If any person on parole commits an indictable offence while on parole, his parole is automatically forfeited by operation of the law and he would be returned to the institution.

Senator Hastings: As I understand it, the parolee is apprehended on an information warrant signed by one of the officers. He is taken before a magistrate, who simply verifies the signature on the warrant and the identity of the parolee, who is then committed to an institution.

Mr. Street: Yes.

Senator Hastings: As I understand it, there is a period of 14 days in which the parole officer may reinstate the parolee.

Mr. Street: Perhaps I should have explained that that is what we call suspension. Any member of the board or designated officer in the field can issue a warrant of suspension on his own authority, which means that the person concerned is arrested and brought before a court. The officer who issued the warrant must report to the board, and the board decides whether to revoke or continue the parole. If that is not done, the person must be released within two weeks. That was designed especially for such persons as those on drugs. It is sometimes advisable to bring them in, dry them out, and then reinstate them on parole, without having their parole actually revoked or forfeited.

Senator Hastings: The parolee can be incarcerated without a hearing, and have his parole revoked without being present to defend himself?

Mr. Street: Yes.

Senator Hastings: He has no opportunity of defending himself or of calling witnesses to refute any charges?

Mr. Street: No. When he is revoked, he is told in no uncertain terms why his parole has been revoked. He knows why, anyway. When he is returned to the institution he is allowed to appear before a panel of two members of the Parole Board, at what is known as a revocation hearing.

Senator Hastings: But that is after the fact.

Mr. Street: That is right.

Senator Hastings: If an inmate of an institution violates a law he is taken before a magistrate, where he has the opportunity of counsel and of calling witnesses. However, if it is an ordinary disciplinary matter within the jurisdiction of an institution, he appears before a warden's court with the opportunity of cross-examining and calling witnesses. He can appeal that decision to the regional director. He receives this treatment within the institution. Yet in this procedure which affects his freedom, he has the benefit of no procedure or device.

Mr. Street: No, except to appeal to the board. Anything can be appealed to the Parole Board. If a person is in a federal prison, however, he has the opportunity of appearing before two members of the Parole Board sitting as part of a panel.

Senator Hastings: But he does not have the benefit of counsel?

Mr. Street: No.