

**The Deputy Chairman:** Is that in a general or in a specific way?

**Mr. Street:** In a general way.

**Senator Thompson:** If I may follow up that question, you are in a sense a quasi-judicial person, a judge with respect to the lives of people. You get letters from people such as myself, a senator, and a number of others?

**Mr. Street:** Yes.

**Senator Thompson:** I would think it quite improper for me to write to a judge concerning clemency, or otherwise, when a case is in court. I do not think it improper to write to you. Can you explain to me, since you must get a number of letters from politicians, do you feel like saying, "To hell with them"?

**Mr. Street:** I would say that there is nothing improper, senator, about getting a letter from a senator or a member of the House of Commons. When we are regarding a case or considering a man for parole, we seek and obtain reports and information from anyone we can. We do it ourselves. We get information in the community, in the prison, and so on. If someone knows him in the community, they are invited and encouraged to write us and say that they know this man, that they are willing to help him. If they are able to do it, there is no reason why a member of Parliament would not be able to do it. Most letters we get from members of Parliament—that is, from senators or from members of the House of Commons—are just asking for information. They do not really know the person. It is not very often that a senator will write and say he knows this person and his family and knows he can get a job here, or something like that. That does not happen very often. He is usually inquiring because a constituent, presumably one of the prisoner's family, has asked him for information. They do not know how to do it, so they ask us. I do not see anything improper about that. We want all the information we can get, and if the man's mother, someone in the community or a friend of the family wants to make representations, he or she is invited to do so. The only difference is that he or she may be doing it through his or her member of Parliament.

What we do object to is if the individual thinks, and sometimes this is apparent, unfortunately, that he can obtain parole by influence. There is nothing that can do a prospective parolee more harm than to try to obtain parole by influence. I am not suggesting that a member of the House of Commons, a senator or a minister would attempt to try to use influence—they do not—but these people do not seem to know it, and I would regard it as a negative factor if a person thinks that is the way parole is granted.

**Senator Thompson:** Have you ever had the Attorney General or the Minister of Justice write to you or speak to you and say, "I want those people not on parole"?

**Mr. Street:** Not on parole?

**Senator Thompson:** Or, "I want them to stay in jail for a longer period"—and that would be done?

**Mr. Street:** I do not recall getting letters . . .

**Senator Thompson:** Not a letter, but representations?

**Mr. Street:** . . . or a representation or communication of any kind like that. But since the Attorney General is in charge of the administration of justice in the province, we are concerned with whatever his opinion may be as to the dangerousness or otherwise of the inmate, so there would be nothing improper in making representations.

I do not recall getting a communication in the exact fashion you say, but it could happen that the police would write to us and say that a particular man was in organized crime and that they regarded him as a potentially very dangerous individual. They would tell us about his connections, and so on, and we would consider all that information along with any other information we had. So, if it is police information or information from the authorities, we are interested in having it.

**Senator Thompson:** I am thinking of political influence. What you are saying to me is that any political person can make his representations, but he is treated just as anyone else is and you are not influenced by the political situation.

**Mr. Street:** No. And it does not happen often. I cannot say that it never happens, but it does not happen often. Members do not try to influence the Board. They are usually just inquiring about the status of a particular case, and we write to them saying that the man, so-and-so, will be eligible at such-and-such a time and that we will leave their letter on file. By that I mean the letter that the member got from whoever wrote to him, presumably making representations that the inmate has a job or a place in the community to go to. It is a means of getting information about inmates through members of Parliament. As I say, the one thing that is not helpful is that even if the inmate thinks he can get it by influence this is a negative factor.

**Senator Laird:** Mr. Street, if I understood you correctly, when you were speaking to Senator Hastings a few minutes ago you said that the provincial authorities knew when a man was due for parole. How would they necessarily know, and do you think any formal steps should be taken to notify them?

**Mr. Street:** Well, if they are concerned with a particular case, they know he is in prison because it is their authorities who put him in there, the police and so on, so they know he has been put in prison. If they care to make representations, they are allowed to do so. We encourage them to, if they want to. Is that what you mean?

**Senator Laird:** No. Let us follow your procedure as set out in your brief. How would they know, for example, that at a certain stage a hearing was going to be held regarding the parole of a person who was applying for parole?

**Mr. Street:** If nothing else, they would know that every inmate would be considered for parole after he had completed one-third of his sentence.

**Senator Laird:** Right. But the onus there is on them to keep track of that situation. You do not do anything specific to alert them to that situation.

**Mr. Street:** Well, in the province of Quebec we do have an arrangement by which we notify them of any application for parole in respect of a person who is serving a sentence of five years or more. They asked us to do that, and so we