

Senator Lapointe: Who said that? Did the wife say that?

Mr. Thomas: The social worker quoted the wife as having said that. In my case, I wonder: what can the commissioners do with this? They are not aware. One may not rely upon this as being valid information. The social worker said: the wife says that this is just an unfortunate incident, I feel that things should turn out all right. I feel that we ought to probe more deeply into this.

Senator Lapointe: No doubt!

Mr. Thomas: It required a deeper probe, but we did not go any further. I'm giving you this one example. He arrives in the Montreal area, he lives in Quebec or the Gaspé Region, his family resides over there. Oftentimes, we have to go and see him. Also, there exists contacts with previous employers, adaptability to work situations; if anything is important from an offender's viewpoint—that is it. How did he behave? Was he on time? was he productive? what went on?

Senator Lapointe: So, does a parole inquiry require expenses, on the average, expenses amounting to how much money?

Mr. Thomas: I have not assessed it, I couldn't tell you. We might have to make a more thorough study of the problem in order to see what expenses are involved.

Senator Lapointe: Evidently, it also depends upon the distance.

Mr. Thomas: It depends upon distance. It also depends, if you wish—upon the number of personnel that we have. At the same time, it depends upon the possibility of obtaining court records. Was the trial short? Was the trial long? Should the trial have been long, it is going to be very costly. I am referring to trials having taken place in Montreal, since, I feel that in the case of small towns, settlements are sometimes arranged between parole officers and the Court Clerk; and, this is far less costly—it is even free, sometimes—whereas, in Montreal, it's prohibitive; we cannot afford it, it costs too much.

Senator Lapointe: And to touch upon an altogether different subject, do you think . . .

[English]

The Acting Chairman: I have a supplementary question. With respect to community investigation reports, you indicated that they are useless. Would you say they are useless with respect to the application for temporary absence? You may or may not answer that.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas: I think that nevertheless, the problem is quite different for temporary absence, that is, it is less important. Whenever you parole someone, and you say: I think that his release, at least, I hope it will benefit him so that he will remain on the outside and thus become an honest citizen. However, it is quite different to allow a one or two day temporary leave, permitting him to visit with his family. Oftentimes, they also have duties—while I'm visiting my family, I'll also try to see my employer; things of that nature, altogether different. It's quite different. I think that it is quite important to get in touch with the

family regarding a temporary leave. I do not believe that this had been done in the Geoffroy case. He had stated: I want to have a mother for my children. It had not been all that clear.

Senator Lapointe: Nevertheless, you carry out a short inquiry?

Mr. Thomas: That is insisted upon by the Board. We, ourselves, do not necessarily require an inquiry. This does not prevent us from getting in touch with the family—we want contacts with the family—and we often receive the mothers—perhaps, more so than fathers—mothers and wives. He does not experience the problem within the institution as such; he lives on the outside also, and there lie his real problems. Whenever he is inside, he cannot leave. Frequently, the wife or the mother is invited—not only to see the problem existing between them, should there be one, but also to permit the validation of information. One may say, for example: what did you notice about your son's behaviour during the days prior to the offense? On the other hand, for example, he himself will say: I do not know, I did not feel too well; I was not working, I felt a bit depressed, then, all of a sudden, I decided to breach the law. Very well, the mother will probably tell us many other things that the fellow had never told us. He spent six months alone up North, because he had money, and she did not know where he had obtained that money from. It is nevertheless strange; we had not known. We learn of it right then, and, when this occurs at the time of parole release, it is already a little too late to do anything.

Senator Lapointe: What percentage of inmates tell lies? Are they all liars, or are there some that frankly tell the truth?

Mr. Thomas: No, they are not all liars. A large percentage are liars, but liars only in the sense that: If I tell him the truth, they won't let me out; if I tell him the truth, they won't transfer me to such and such an institution; I won't have the opportunity of obtaining a temporary leave. With this type of individual, we are obliged to double-check everything they tell us; and should we really want—or, in the event we cannot prove the truth, we must then obtain testimony from various sources—that permits us to establish reconciling factors.

Senator Lapointe: Are there any who are mythomaniac, really mythomaniac, who imagine all sorts of things, and who are sincere in imagining that?

Mr. Thomas: Yes, but only a small percentage.

Senator Lapointe: Mr. President, may I then ask a few questions concerning a different topic?

The Acting President: Yes.

Senator Lapointe: The rehabilitation of ordinary offenders implies inducing him to not commit similar crimes any more. Do you think that you may likewise succeed insofar as political, philosophical or other types of prisoners are concerned? May his views be changed, or is it impossible?

Mr. Cyr: I believe that in such a situation, we are operating at a different level. I think that prisoners that fall in the category you have just mentioned, may evidently change their mind. As is true for everyone, an individual may change his views, just as everybody may change their views—evidently, this is quite difficult to foresee. I do not