

assessing our operation, trying new projects and new procedures to improve the effectiveness of the system. Despite, of course, our sincere belief in the efficacy of parole and our efforts to improve it, there is still bound to be some criticism, because, as I said, prisoners are not a popular cause, it is a very sensitive thing and we are dealing with people and not just with numbers.

In the first 153 months of our operation we granted parole to 38,444 inmates in the various federal and provincial prisons across the country. During that time, of those 38,444 inmates we have had to return to prison 5,250, of whom 3,180 committed indictable offences while on parole and had their paroles forfeited; 2,070 failed to abide by their parole conditions or may have committed a minor offence and had their paroles revoked. This means that, on the average, for the first 12 years and 11 months nearly 87 per cent of all those 38,000 persons granted parole completed their paroles without causing trouble or misbehaving.

This, honourable senators, is our record to date, and is one of which I think we may be justifiably proud. Despite our successes so far we are always anxious to find new and better ways to operate the system because, as you can appreciate, there is no exact science about it; it is a matter of using our best judgment and obtaining the most comprehensive information possible. We shall naturally await the outcome of your deliberations with a great deal of anticipation. We expect that your findings and recommendations will be helpful, and we hope that the result of your inquiry will mean a better understanding of the problems involved in the parole system and will provide us with some more support, which we surely need.

Senator Hastings: Thank you very much for your comprehensive brief and also for your opening statement. I might say that while I have been one of your critics I have also been one of your best supporters, and I hope you accept that in the spirit in which I am saying it.

Mr. Street: Certainly.

Senator Hastings: I am a great believer in parole, in you and the board, and in the job you have done.

Mr. Street: Thank you.

Senator Hastings: I believe that parole is the only instrument or tool that goes anywhere near filling the objective of rehabilitation, the bringing of the man into society. You are removing the man from the milieu or environment where rehabilitation is impossible or next to impossible. You bring him back into or closer to society, to the natural surroundings where rehabilitation becomes possible. Naturally, you are going to have failures, but we surely must be prepared to assume that risk in this day and age of enlightened treatment of individuals and fellow human beings.

I said your brief was very comprehensive and, if your budget will stand it, I suggest that you print about 7,000 copies for the inmates of Canadian penitentiaries and for every Canadian newspaper editor.

My first question is directed to your involvement with or consultation with provincial governments or cabinet ministers, and consultation with respect to parole. Do you

have consultations and discussions with or advice from provincial cabinet ministers or departments?

Mr. Street: We are in constant touch with all the provincial authorities across the country who deal in any way with prisons. One of the functions of our men in the field is to keep in touch with the attorney general's department or whichever department operates the prison system—it varies a little, as you know. When we are in touch with them, or when I visit an area, I never fail to pay my respects to the attorney general or the person in charge of prisons. So there is constant communication or liaison with them.

We also have contact with them in special cases, such as when the Dukhobor problem arose in British Columbia. As you can imagine, that was a very tense and serious situation, when something like 200 Dukhobors were locked up. We have had and continue to have meetings with the police, the attorney general people, and so on. As a result of all this we had police conferences and we started paroling them and it worked out very well.

We had the same thing with the province of Quebec when we were dealing with the F.L.Q. cases. Then we were dealing with special categories of cases. Otherwise we just keep in touch with them, because we are paroling people out of their prisons. Is that what you mean, or was there something else you had in mind?

Senator Hastings: I am asking specifically: Do you consult the Minister of Justice or a minister of the Quebec Cabinet with respect to a recommendation of granting or withholding parole?

Mr. Street: No, but we have an understanding, especially with Quebec and certain other provinces, and especially with police forces. If they have any special information about a criminal who may be in organized crime or who may be more dangerous than his record indicates, the provinces are invited to get in touch with us and then we get their information. But we do not consult them each time we want to parole someone. They are invited at any time to make representations to us, the same as anyone else. They know when people have got in prison and when they will be considered for parole; and, if they want to, they may get in touch and may make recommendations. We do not necessarily consult them in each case.

Senator Hastings: I am wrong in my suggestion, then, that you do consult the Justice Minister of the Solicitor-General in Quebec with respect to each case from the province of Quebec, and that he does in fact have a printed form which he supplies you with, giving "yes", or "no" or "maybe"?

Mr. Street: No, we do not consult them, but they are invited or encouraged to consult us, if they wish, and make representations in special cases. We cannot very well consult them about each case. What I am thinking about is the more dangerous cases, persons engaged in organized crime or something like that.

Senator Hastings: You do invite them then to make representations?

Mr. Street: Yes.