

The Deputy Chairman: I accepted the motion, and it is carried.

For text of brief see Appendix "A" . . .

The Deputy Chairman: I now call on Mr. Street, who is the Chairman of the National Parole Board and is a man who has had a lifetime of experience and interest in the problems we are dealing with today.

Mr. T. G. Street, Q.C., Chairman, National Parole Board: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable senators.

[*Translation*]

To start I would like to say a few words in French. The objective of the National Parole Board is to select from the penitentiaries in Canada, the prisoners who clearly indicate that they have the intention to rehabilitate themselves and thereby help them by granting them a parole.

To prove to you that I am truly bilingual, I will continue in English.

[*Text*]

Honourable senators, as you have said, Mr. Chairman, we have submitted a brief that gives you an outline of how the parole system operates and that tells you something about our policy and procedure. Since you all have copies of this, I will not take the time to go over it again, but I would like to emphasize certain points, and then I would, of course, be pleased to answer any questions you may have or discuss in greater detail any particular features of the system.

The dual purpose of parole is the protection of society and the rehabilitation of inmates. It is a matter of helping those who want to help themselves. The protection of the public, of course, is paramount, and we do not grant parole unless we think there is at least a reasonable chance of success. When a person is granted parole he is put under supervision, and we are especially careful with inmates who are or maybe potentially dangerous.

There are about 7,000 inmates in our federal prisons and about 15,000 inmates in our provincial prisons. As you know, we have jurisdiction in both federal and provincial prisons. Since over 80 per cent of those people have been in prison before, it seems fairly apparent that the sentence of imprisonment for them was not particularly beneficial.

Most of the inmates in prison, however, are not dangerous or vicious or violent, and we believe that most of them could be kept under control in the community. Therefore, I suggest that there should be more treatment and control in the community, that the sentence of imprisonment should be used only as a last resort, and then only if no other form of treatment or control is available.

I think it is important to remember that almost all prisoners will come out of prison sooner or later anyway, whether we like it or not and whether they are rehabilitated or not. I therefore suggest it is surely more beneficial to have them come out under supervision, where they can be helped with their problems and can be controlled so that they cannot easily return to crime.

If the people whom we select for parole under our selective system need the guidance and counselling treatment, advice and surveillance that go with good parole supervi-

sion, the prisoners who do not get parole need that even more. It is because of this kind of reasoning that there will be a system of mandatory supervision, which will come into full effect some time next month, so that all prisoners coming out of federal prisons who have been sentenced since August, 1970 will be under a form of mandatory supervision for their remission time. While it will not be called parole but mandatory supervision, they will be subject to the same conditions and restrictions as parolees are.

Besides the fact that it is desirable that as many people as possible should come out of prison under supervision, they are under control not just for the extra time they would have spent in prison but for the remission time also, which is one-third of their sentence. This means that they are under control for a much longer period than they would be if they remained in prison, and I suggest that as a result the public is much better protected.

Since both probation and parole are about 75 per cent successful while they are in effect, I think they should be used more often. There should be more treatment and control in the community, and parole is one of the ways in which this can be accomplished.

Even at the best of times I am sure you can appreciate that operating a parole system is very difficult. Criminals are just naturally not a popular cause, and everyone has different views about them. The police, for instance, have a certain view of criminals and how they should be treated, and we try hard to work with the police and co-operate with them, and convince them that what we are doing is effective. The judges also have a certain point of view, and we keep in touch with them to explain to them our function. The public is also concerned; sometimes the public is inclined to be punitive, and we are at great pains to try to explain to the public that the only way they can be properly protected is by the rehabilitation of inmates coming out of prison, or at least having them under control. The prisoners themselves have a different view, as you can imagine, of how the parole system does or should operate.

Our job is to try to satisfy all these conflicting views in order to have the idea of parole accepted and to try to make the system work. Actually, in doing so we receive a great deal of criticism from all sources. We are criticized for paroling too many people, and we get just as much criticism from many sources for paroling too few. We are criticized sometimes for paroling people too early, and again just as much for paroling people too late in their sentences. It seems apparent almost that we are damned if we do and that we are damned if we don't.

As you can appreciate, this is not a popularity contest. We are quite accustomed to being criticized, because there does not seem to be any easy way in which we are going to make everybody happy. Naturally, there are a great many people with different points of view who think they can do our job better than we can. It is a matter of trying to do the best we can and keeping in touch with all the people I have mentioned, because we believe that what we are doing is effective, and we try to satisfy as many people as possible.

However, I assure you, honourable senators, that none of us in the parole system thinks that our system is perfect, or that there is any magic in our system, or that it cannot possibly be improved. We are constantly reviewing and