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CANADA'S PENITENTIARY SYSTEM

(Prepared in the Canadian Penitentiary Service, Ottawa.)

Jurisdiction over the Canadian Penitentiary Service, which operates under the Penitentiary Act, belongs to the Solicitor General of Canada. The Service is responsible for all federal penal institutions and for the care and training of persons sentenced or committed to such institutions.

The Commissioner of Penitentiaries, under the direction of the Solicitor General, has control and management of the Service and all matters connected therewith. In the year ended March 31, 1972, the federal penitentiary system consisted of seven maximum-security institutions, nine medium-security, 12 minimum-security and 20 specialized institutions.

The maximum-security institutions receive inmates sentenced by the courts to imprisonment for terms of from two years to life. These are located at Dorchester, New Brunswick; Ville de Laval and Ste. Anne des Plaines, Quebec; Kingston and Millhaven, Ontario; Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; and New Westminster, British Columbia. The maximum-security institutions at Ste. Anne des Plaines and Millhaven were constructed as part of a plan to gradually abandon the St. Vincent de Paul and Kingston penitentiaries.

Location of institutions

The medium- and minimum-security institutions and the correctional camps receive inmates transferred from the maximum-security institutions on the basis of their suitability for special forms of training, including vocational training. The medium-security institutions are located as follows:

- the Springhill Institution at Springhill, Nova Scotia;
- the Federal Training Centre and the Leclerc Institution at Ville de Laval, Que.;
- the Cowansville Institution at Cowansville, Que.;
- the Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions within a few miles of Kingston, Ont.;

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the Warkworth Institution at Campbellford, Ont.;

the Stony Mountain Institution at Stony Mountain,
Manitoba;

the Drumheller Institution at Drumheller, Alberta.

The minimum-security institutions are located as follows:

the Dorchester Penitentiary Farm Annex at
Dorchester, N.B.;

the Laval Minimum Security Institution at
Ville de Laval, Que.;

the Ste. Anne des Plaines Minimum Security
Institution at Ste. Anne des Plaines, Que.;

the Joyceville Institution Farm Annex at
Joyceville, Ont.;

the Collins Bay Institution Farm Annex near
Kingston, Ont.;

the Millhaven Minimum Security Institution at
Millhaven, Ont.;

the Beaver Creek Correctional Camp near
Gravenhurst, Ont.;

the Landry Crossing Correctional Camp near
Petawawa, Ont.;

the Stony Mountain Institution Farm Annex at
Stony Mountain, Man.;

the Saskatchewan Penitentiary Farm Annex at
Prince Albert, Sask.;

the William Head Institution at Metchosin,
B.C.;

the Agassiz Correctional Camp at Agassiz, B.C.

The Penitentiary Service operates specialized institutions located
as follows:

the Correctional Development Centre at Ville
de Laval, Que., for the treatment of special
cases and the training of staff;

the Regional Medical Centre at Ville de Laval,
Que.;

the Regional Reception Centre at Ste. Anne
des Plaines, Que.;

the Matsqui Institution at Abbotsford, B.C., for
the training of narcotic addicts;

the Regional Medical Centre at Abbotsford, B.C.;

the Mountain Prison near Agassiz, B.C., for the
training of older male recidivists;

the Prison for Women at Kingston, Ont.;

the Regional Medical Centre at Kingston, Ont.;

the Regional Reception Centre at Kingston, Ont.,

and the following community correctional centres:

the Parr Town Centre at St. John, N.B.;

the Carleton Centre at Halifax, N.S.;

the St. Hubert Centre at Montreal, Que.;

the Portsmouth Centre at Kingston, Ont.;

the Montgomery Centre at Toronto, Ont.;

the Osborne Centre at Winnipeg, Man.;

the Oskana Centre at Regina, Sask.;

the Grierson Centre at Edmonton, Alta.;

the Scarboro Centre at Calgary, Alta.;

the West Georgia Centre at Vancouver, B.C.;

the Burrard Centre at Vancouver, B.C.

Some inmates sentenced to penitentiary terms in Newfoundland are held in the provincially-operated centres at St. John's, under the provisions of Section 14 of the Penitentiary Act.

The headquarters of the Penitentiary Service is located at Ottawa and regional directorates at Vancouver, B.C., Kingston, Ontario, and Ville de Laval, Quebec, for the Western, Ontario and Quebec areas, respectively.

Three correctional staff colleges -- at Kingston, Ville de Laval and New Westminster -- are operated for the training of recruits, for refreshing purposes for the training of senior penitentiary officers. These staff colleges also provide excellent facilities for Service-wide conferences of institutional heads and other special groups of officers.

As of March 31, 1972, 36 per cent of the inmates were in maximum-security institutions, 51 per cent in medium security and 13 per cent in minimum security. New institutions have been carefully designed to provide facilities for the rehabilitation of their inmates. All afford space for both indoor and outdoor recreation. Some of the older institutions are being brought up-to-date to meet present-day needs and others are being phased out.

Processing of prisoners

Every inmate enters the federal penal system through a regional reception centre or a receiving institution. The prime purpose of the reception centre is to allow a complete diagnosis of each inmate and, upon the basis of the results of that diagnosis, to allocate the inmate to the institution within the system that will most closely provide the training program and the degree of security that is proper in his case. Facilities provide for admission in one of three categories: age 21 years and younger, age 22 years and older and first offenders, and recidivists. Young or first offenders are segregated from the recidivists. Doctors, psychologists, and social workers examine them for physical and mental health, ability, training and need for schooling, so as to launch them on a rehabilitation program. The program of the correctional services is directed primarily toward assisting the inmate in every way possible to regain his proper place in society. Better facilities to achieve this are constantly available, and the staff involved in the process is highly dedicated. Academic opportunities are provided and inmates attend classes on either a full-time or part-time basis. Other students advance their education by correspondence courses offered at the elementary, secondary or university level. In 1971-72, approximately 3,500 inmates participated in adult-education and vocational-training programs offered by the Penitentiary Service, often with a view to acquiring a trade or profession. Expanded use was made of day parole and temporary absence in order to enable students to attend community education facilities. Fifty inmate students were attending university, high school or community colleges at year-end. Religious programs are provided for all inmates and from 20 per cent to 50 per cent of them participate in services of worship. Most chapels run multi-purpose chapel programs during the week, where, besides religious instruction, other activities related to religious services are carried out. There is active inmate involvement in this section of the program, including suitable community participation.

Living-unit idea

Plans have been completed to introduce inter-disciplinary teams to be responsible for groups of inmates on a living-unit basis in additional institutions besides the five originally selected as pilot institutions. The living-unit idea is an attempt to personalize the contacts between staff and

inmates, to activate interpersonal relations so that inmates, many of whom have regarded authority -- whether inside or outside institutions -- as antagonistic, can learn how to relate to it. This conception breaks down the inmate population into smaller groups with assigned staff, and facilitates the creation of interpersonal relations. The living-unit training program will be conducted on a continuing basis as additional institutions are designated "living-unit institutions." The training program for living-unit officers is scheduled to keep up with the demand in order that training may occur immediately following the competitive and/or selection process. By March 1973, almost 300 living-unit officers will have undergone training; selection beyond March 1973 will be made as additional institutions become living-unit operations. The living-unit program cannot function properly without the simultaneous establishment of adequate and indispensable security teams. The principles of the living unit cannot be implemented successfully without clearly dividing responsibilities between security and living-unit officers. Each institution, therefore, will have its own security force. The separation of correctional officers into two groups will help provide better specialized training, more frequent and effective staff meetings and generally improved security control.

Temporary absences continued to increase sharply during the 1971-72 fiscal year and easily exceeded 35,000. Such leaves are granted for periods of up to three days by the institutional help, and up to 15 days by the Commissioner for humanitarian, rehabilitative and medical reasons. The failure rate of this program was a fraction of 1 per cent.

A sound and healthy program of evening and weekend activities has been expanded over the past year. Eighteen citizen-participation committees are operating in institutions, comprising 150 citizens, and more than 1,500 volunteers are involved in inmates' programs, both institutional and community-oriented. A number of those involved were ex-inmates who were responsible for organizing their own groups in consultation with institutional authorities. The programs included Alcoholics Anonymous, drama, singing, musical instruction, guitar groups and public speaking, as well as a varied assortment of discussion groups run by private agencies, professional and volunteer citizens and community groups, lecturers, films, sports and recreation.

The inmate who is in need receives professional services or counselling by staff specialists who serve an inmate population of about 7,800. There are 20 full-time physicians and five on contractual arrangements or part-time; 19 full-time dentists and three part-time; ten psychiatrists on permanent strength, 15 on contract or part-time; 28 full-time psychologists and ten part-time, and 125 classification officers and social workers.

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