

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 individual inmate, and based upon the results of that diagnosis to place the inmate in the institution within the system that will provide the best mix of training program and degree of security required. Facilities provide for admission in one of three categories: age 21 years and under, age 22 years and over and first offenders, and recidivists. Young or first offenders are segregated from the recidivists. Doctors, psychologists, and social workers examine them for their physical and mental health, abilities, training and need for schooling in order to launch them on a rehabilitation program. The program of the correctional services is directed primarily toward assisting the inmate in every possible way to regain his proper place in society. Better facilities to achieve this are becoming available and the staff involved in the process is highly dedicated. Academic opportunities are provided and inmates attend classes on either a full- or part-time basis. Other students advance their education by correspondence courses offered at the elementary, secondary or university level. In 1973-74, approximately 7,000 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 temporary parole and temporary absence permits to enable students to attend community education facilities; 45 inmate students were attending university, high school or community colleges at year-end. Religious programs are provided for all inmates and between 20% and 50% of them participate in worship services. Most chapels run multi-purpose chapel programs during the week where, besides instruction, other activities related to religious services are carried out. There is active inmate involvement in this section of the program which also includes suitable community participation.

Plans have been finalized to introduce interdisciplinary teams to be responsible for groups of inmates on a living unit basis in institutions other than the five originally selected as pilot institutions. The living unit concept is an attempt to personalize the contacts between staff and inmate, to activate interpersonal relationships so that inmates, many of whom have regarded authority — whether inside or outside institutions — as antagonistic, can learn how to relate to it. This concept breaks down the inmate population into smaller groups with assigned staff, and facilitates the development of interpersonal relationships. The living unit training program will be conducted on a continuing basis as additional institutions are designated as "Living Unit Institutions". The training program for living unit officers is scheduled to keep up with the demand in order that training will occur immediately following the competitive and/or selection process. The program cannot function properly without establishing simultaneously 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. Therefore, each institution will have its own security force. The separation into two groups of correctional officers will help in providing better specialized training, more frequent and effective staff meetings and over-all improved security control.

The temporary absence program has been used extensively during the fiscal year 1973-74. More than 34,000 individual permits and 3,000 group permits were authorized and the failure rate has been kept down to a fraction of 1%. The program involved over 5,000 different inmates. Temporary absence can be granted for periods of up to three days by heads of institutions and 15 days by the Commissioner of Penitentiaries for humanitarian, rehabilitative and medical reasons.

A sound program of evening and weekend activities has been expanded over the past year. Twenty-one citizen participation committees comprising 210 citizens operate in institutions. More than 4,000 citizen volunteers are involved in inmate programs both institutional and community oriented. A number of those involved are ex-inmates who are responsible for organizing their own groups in consultation with institutional authorities. The programs include Alcoholics Anonymous, drama, singing, music instruction, guitar groups, public speaking, lectures, films, sports and recreation as well as diversified discussion groups led by private agencies, professionals, voluntary citizens and community groups.

An inmate in need of professional treatment or counselling is served by staff specialists responsible for an inmate population of about 9,200. There are 15 full-time physicians and 14 on contractual arrangements or part-time; four full-time dentists and 13 part-time or on contract; 14 psychiatrists on permanent strength, 13 on contract or part-time; 44 psychologists and 315 classification officers and social workers.