

granted for periods up to three days by heads of institutions and up to 15 days by the commissioner of penitentiaries for humanitarian, rehabilitative or medical reasons. Evening and weekend activities involving the outside community were continued. Twenty-one citizen participation committees comprising 210 citizens operated in the institutions. More than 4,000 citizen volunteers were involved in inmate programs in the institutions and outside; these included ex-inmates. Community-based programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, drama, music instruction, public speaking, lectures, films, recreation, discussion groups led by private agencies, professionals, citizen volunteers, and community groups all have a part in the inmate's life. Most institutional chapels have multi-purpose programs where religious instruction is provided and other activities are available. Community participation in the programs is encouraged.

2.9.2 The parole system

Significant changes to the National Parole Board's operations were made with the passing of two bills by Parliament in 1976 and 1977. The Criminal Law Amendment Act (No. 2), 1976 (SC 1974-75-76, c.105), proclaimed July 26, 1976, changed the parole eligibility dates for anyone sentenced to life for murder on or after that date and required the board to approve temporary absences for certain inmates. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1977 (SC 1977 c.53) was proclaimed, in part, October 15, 1977; the remaining sections would come into effect in 1978. Amendments to the Parole Act expanded the board's membership, brought community participation in the parole review for murderers or those serving indeterminate sentences, and introduced procedural safeguards for inmates being considered for parole. The responsibility for the national parole service was transferred to the commissioner of corrections who is also responsible for the Canadian Penitentiary Service. It was expected that during 1978 the sections allowing the transfer of the responsibility for unescorted temporary absences from the penitentiary service to the board would be proclaimed.

The board's headquarters is in Ottawa with regional offices in Moncton, Montreal, Kingston, Saskatoon and Vancouver. There are 26 full-time board members, including a chairman and vice-chairman, all appointed by the Governor-in-Council for a period of up to 10 years. All may be reappointed. The government may also appoint temporary members for a maximum period of one year and a temporary substitute member for a member who is absent or unable to act. Representatives of police forces, of provincial, municipal, or other local governments, of local professional, trade, or community associations in any region may be designated to act as regular members in the review of cases of inmates serving life sentences for murder or indeterminate sentences as dangerous offenders.

The National Parole Board has exclusive jurisdiction and absolute discretion to grant, refuse, or revoke full parole or day parole for any person serving a sentence of imprisonment imposed under an act of Parliament or for criminal contempt of court. The board has no jurisdiction over a child under the Juvenile Delinquents Act or a person serving an intermittent sentence under Section 663 of the criminal code.

Parole is a conditional release of a prison inmate who has served a specific portion of the sentence as laid down by law, meets certain criteria and, following a review of the case, is considered ready to finish the sentence in the community. The inmate is released with definite conditions and is under supervision.

The board is also involved in granting temporary absences, a short-term release of penitentiary inmates, given before the eligibility date for parole. It must approve any escorted temporary absence for anyone serving a sentence of murder. With the expected proclamation of additional sections of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1977 in 1978, it would be given the responsibility to authorize all unescorted temporary absences for medical, humanitarian or rehabilitative reasons.

During the period before the inmate is eligible for full parole consideration, the board may grant longer part-time releases, known as day parole, for education or training not available in the institution or for counselling. Inmates return to the institution or to a special centre at specific times during the period of release, which may last four months. Most inmates may start a day parole program two years before the full parole eligibility date. Inmates serving life sentences for murder become eligible three