

## A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE

**Question:** What is the statistical picture of federal corrections and conditional release in Canada?

**Background:** The Corrections Statistics Committee, composed of representatives of the Department of the Solicitor General, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the National Parole Board and the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, has produced an overview of statistics on corrections and conditional release. The overview includes contextual information on crime and the criminal justice system, corrections administration, offender population, conditional release, and special applications of criminal justice.

**Answer:** The statistical picture can be highlighted as follows:

*Context.* Police-reported crime rate has been decreasing since 1991. Crime rates tend to increase from east to west and are highest in the north. Canada's incarceration rate is high relative to other Western countries but it has decreased in recent years.

*Administration.* Federal expenditures on corrections have increased in the past five years; they represent less than 1% of the total federal government budget. The average cost of keeping a male inmate in penitentiary is almost \$68,000, and about \$115,000 for a female inmate. Of the approximately 14,000 CSC staff, about 82% work in institutions, 8% in community supervision and 10% in headquarters and central services.

*Offender Population.* The number of federal offenders has declined in recent years, and averaged 12,898 in fiscal year 1999/00. While admissions of male offenders to federal custody have decreased, the number of admissions of female offenders has been increasing in the past five years. The supervised offender population in the community has increased, and totalled just over 7,800 as of March 31, 2000. About two-thirds of the Aboriginal offenders under federal sentence are incarcerated (rather than under community supervision) as compared with a corresponding figure of about 57% for non-Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal offenders are more likely to have committed a violent offence.

*Conditional Release.* The grant rates for day parole and full parole have been level in recent years; the rates were about 72% and 44%, respectively, in fiscal year 1999/00. Offenders who are granted full parole serve about 40% of their sentence prior to starting full parole. The full parole grant rate for Aboriginal offenders has increased significantly over the last several years; however, it was about 9% lower than the rate for non-Aboriginal offenders. The rate of reconviction for violent offences while under community supervision has been declining in the past five years, and those under discretionary release (full parole and day parole) are less likely to be convicted of a violent offence than those on statutory release.

*Special Applications of Criminal Justice.* The number of reviews for detention until the end of the sentence reached a peak of 529 in 1995/96 and has declined in subsequent years (224 in 1999/00). Aboriginal offenders have accounted for about 28% of all offenders detained during the past five years, while they account for about 15% of the total offender population. The number of Dangerous Offender designations has increased since 1992, and offenders with Long-Term Supervision orders (pursuant

to legislation that came into force in August 1997) are beginning to enter the federal correctional system. As of September 2000, there were 276 Dangerous Offenders and 60 offenders with Long-Term Supervision orders.

#### **Some Policy Implications:**

1. The statistics show that Aboriginal offenders are more likely to be incarcerated and detained, and less likely to be paroled than non-Aboriginal offenders. Further sustained efforts in policy and program development in respect to Aboriginal offenders are required to address this discrepancy.
2. The increase in admissions of female offenders, while still representing relatively small absolute numbers in comparison to male offenders, places increased importance on the policy and program development that has been under way in respect to federally sentenced women in the past ten years.

**Source:** *Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview (November, 2000)*. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.

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