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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RELEASED PRISONERS

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Prue Oxley

U.S. Department of Justice
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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RELEASED PRISONERS

**An Evaluation of the Pilot Programme
at Paparua Prison
October to December 1983**

by Prue Oxley

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Preface

The circumstances of people released from prison vary widely. Some when released have to serve a period of supervision by a probation officer as part of the sentence imposed by the court. Others are not under supervision at all. Some may receive the assistance of the Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society or of some other concerned community group. Some prisoners have the benefit of parole from prison to work in the community for up to three months and be paid at the rate for the job. They thus have on release a lump sum of money with which to meet financial commitments. Some may return to families and relatives with whom links have been maintained by occasional short periods of parole from the prison to stay with them. Some prisoners serve their sentence in a prison near the community from which they came. Others do not and have little direct contact with their community.

Life for people released from the prison does not usually resume from where it left off at the beginning of the sentence. More commonly they have to adapt to changed circumstances.

The financial position of people released from prison is especially important. This report presents the results of a pilot programme which had as one of its aims providing a realistic amount of money to meet the immediate financial needs of people released from prison. It both illustrates well a particular difficulty faced by those on release and provides useful information with which to develop a financial assistance programme.

The research was conducted by Prue Oxley, a Senior Research Officer of the Planning and Development Division with the co-operation and assistance of district staff in the Departments of Social Welfare and Labour, in the Penal and Probation Divisions of the Department of Justice, and staff of the Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society in Christchurch.

G.L. Simpson
Director, Planning and Development
Department of Justice
September 1984

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Summary

INTRODUCTION

In September 1983 the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Welfare jointly introduced a programme at Paparua Prison, Christchurch aimed at financially assisting prisoners at the time of their release. The programme was introduced on a pilot basis for the three months, October to December 1983. Its goals were:

1. To reduce the incidence of reoffending immediately following release attributable to lack of money.
2. To have a realistic amount of money available to prisoners on the day of release to meet their immediate needs.
3. To reduce the frustration experienced by released prisoners when dealing with assistance agencies.
4. To reduce the problems Department of Social Welfare staff have in dealing with released prisoners.

The evaluation concentrated on whether goal 2 was achieved or not. The other goals were addressed briefly.

THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMME

The main components of the programme were two, monthly pre-release meetings. The first was attended by representatives of the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, the Probation Service, and the Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS). Their task was to inform prisoners of available assistance and how to get it. Two of these persons returned to the second meeting to help prisoners complete applications for an unemployment benefit. This application was filed with the Department of Social Welfare prior to the prisoner's release.

The pilot programme was limited to prisoners intending to live in Christchurch. 63% were thus eligible. 63% of all prisoners attended the first meeting and 59% of those eligible attended the second meeting. 80% of the eligible prisoners applied for an unemployment benefit.

THE EFFECT OF THE PILOT PROGRAMME ON THE EX-PRISONER'S FINANCIAL POSITION (GOAL 2)

Pilot prisoners differed significantly from non-pilot prisoners in respect of :

- (i) The time between release and unemployment benefit application. The median for pilot prisoners was 19 days before release compared with 1 day after release for non-pilot prisoners.
- (ii) The time between release and first unemployment benefit payment. The median for pilot prisoners was 8 days after release compared with 9.5 days after for non-pilot prisoners.
- (iii) The amount of the first special needs grant (SNG). The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$31 compared with \$22 for non-pilot prisoners.

Pilot prisoners did not differ significantly from non-pilot prisoners in the following respects :

- (i) The total amount of money owing from the prison when released. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$24.
- (ii) The amount of money in hand as they left prison. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$15.

- (iii) The percentage who received a probation imprest account loan, its amount and the time between release and receiving it. 26% of pilot prisoners received a probation loan, the median amount being \$20, after a median period of 6 days.
- (iv) The percentage who received an unemployment benefit. 77% of the pilot prisoners received an unemployment benefit.
- (v) The amount of the first unemployment benefit payment. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$46.
- (vi) The percentage who received and the time between release and receiving an SNG. 45% of the pilot prisoners received an SNG, usually on the same day as release.
- (vii) The proportion of SNGs granted as non-recoverable. 60% of the pilot SNGs were non-recoverable.
- (viii) The amount of money in hand from a number of sources on the day of release. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$26.

In order to assess whether the pilot prisoners had a "realistic amount" of money, their financial position was compared against four standards :

- (i) The financial position of non-pilot prisoners.
- (ii) The financial position of a 1981 New Zealand sample of prisoners.
- (iii) The unemployment benefit rate.
- (iv) Estimates of the costs prisoners meet when released.

In no case did the position of the pilot prisoners meet the required standard.

It was concluded that this failure arose because the pilot programme was misdirected and concentrated on the unemployment benefit when it should have been concentrating on SNGs as a means of filling the inevitable gap of 8-10 days between release and first benefit payment.

REDUCING REOFFENDING (GOAL 1)

16% of the pilot prisoners reoffended within four weeks of being released and half of these were within 11 days. The pilot prisoners were not significantly different from the non-pilot prisoners in this respect. The hypothesis that having adequate money discourages reoffending could not be tested as neither the pilot nor non-pilot group had "adequate" money. The reoffenders did not have significantly less money than those who did not reoffend.

REDUCING MUTUAL FRUSTRATION (GOALS 3 AND 4)

The Department of Social Welfare reported that the procedures of the pilot scheme resulted in considerably less contact between their staff and released prisoners and that this in turn resulted in less conflict and anxiety for all parties. PARS and the Probation Service reported that completing benefit applications before release also reduces stress for the inmate.

EXTENDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS IN ALL NEW ZEALAND PRISONS

The final chapter discusses the successful features of the scheme, similar schemes in other prisons, and overseas experiments that analyse how financial assistance relates to reoffending. Finally, issues that need to be considered when extending a

financial assistance programme nationwide are raised : explicit formulation of the purpose of the programme and subsequent responsibilities; the main purpose is the welfare of the prisoner; formal liaison between involved organisations; ways of filling the 8-10 day gap using SNGs; prisoners travelling to distant destinations; isolated prisons; and a suggested skeleton of revised goals and objectives.

CHAPTER 1

The Financial Assistance Pilot Programme

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In September 1983 the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Welfare jointly introduced a programme at Paparua Prison, Christchurch aimed at financially assisting prisoners at the time of their release. The programme was introduced on a pilot basis for the three months, October to December 1983.

1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the financial assistance programme as set out below were constructed for the purpose of directing this evaluation. * They were based on information from a number of sources: Department of Justice, head office files; interviews with head office staff in the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Welfare; participation in and minutes of the first meeting of the Christchurch group involved in running the programme; interviews with all the Christchurch participants.

Goals

1. To reduce the incidence of reoffending immediately following release attributable to lack of money.
2. To have a realistic amount of money available to prisoners on the day of release to meet their immediate needs.

* See Appendix I for a detailed description of this process.

3. To reduce the frustration experienced by released prisoners when dealing with assistance agencies.
4. To reduce the problems Department of Social Welfare staff have in dealing with released prisoners.

Objectives

5. To ensure prisoners are aware of services and assistance available on release.
6. To have Department of Social Welfare financial assistance (if eligible) available on the day of release.
7. To ensure that the maximum amount of assistance available under the Department of Social Welfare benefits system is granted to help cover individual ex-prisoner's immediate needs (e.g. accommodation, food, clothing, fares).
8. To reduce frustrating contact between ex-prisoners and the Department of Social Welfare office staff.

Operational Objectives

9. To hold monthly pre-release meetings which inform prisoners who are to be released during the next month of services and assistance available.
10. To have the applications for the Department of Social Welfare benefits and grants of prisoners intending to live in Christchurch completed to a standard acceptable to the Department of Social Welfare.
11. To have these applications lodged in the Department of Social Welfare in time for them to be processed prior to the day of release.
12. To have the benefit and/or grant (if eligible) effective from the day of release.
13. To have the unemployment benefit (if eligible) paid as soon as possible after release.

3.

14. To have special needs grants (if eligible) available on the day of release.
15. To direct ex-prisoners who intend to live in Christchurch to Department of Social Welfare staff who are specifically responsible for applications from ex-prisoners.

CHAPTER 2

The Evaluation

2.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

- (i) To describe how the pilot financial assistance programme works in practice.
- (ii) To assess its effectiveness in ensuring prisoners have a realistic amount of money on release.

As these objectives show, the evaluation is not concentrating equally on all of the scheme's goals and objectives. Its main thrust relates to goal 2 – that prisoners have a realistic amount of money available to meet their immediate needs when released.

The challenge set by goal 1 (to reduce reoffending which is caused by lack of money when released) is not taken up because it is beyond the resources of this evaluation. Chapter 5 presents descriptive reoffending data but does not address the issue of whether the reoffending outcomes are affected by the availability of money on release.

Because the evaluation stems mainly from the Department of Justice's concerns, the evaluation does not concentrate on goals 3 and 4 – the mutual frustrations felt by ex-prisoners and Social Welfare staff when benefit applications are made. The Department of Social Welfare's assessment on this aspect is reported in chapter 6.

2.2 EVALUATION METHODS

Many sources of data were used in this evaluation: documentation preceding the introduction of the pilot programme; participation in and observation of local meetings – both those related to the organisation of the scheme and the actual pre-release meetings for prisoners; inmate files at the prison; beneficiary files at the Department of Social Welfare; interviews with staff involved in the pilot programme; and information from prisons, probation offices and the Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Societies (PARS) in centres outside Christchurch.

Information was collected on all prisoners released from Paparua during the pilot period (October to December 1983) and all prisoners released during the three preceding months. Because the pilot programme applied only to ex-prisoners living in Christchurch, both these groups were divided into those intending to live in Christchurch and others. This produced four groups for analysis.

Preliminary planned comparisons showed that the financial position of released prisoners varied according to whether they lived in Christchurch or not, but that it did not vary over time. Therefore the main analysis controlled for place of residence by comparing the fortunes of prisoners who experienced the pilot programme with another group who similarly lived in Christchurch but who were released prior to the pilot programme. In summary, the two groups compared in the main analysis are:

- A. Non-pilot, i.e. those released July–September and living in Christchurch.
- B. Pilot, i.e. those released October–December and living in Christchurch.

The research design is explained in detail in appendix 1. The results of the two preliminary analyses are reported in appendices 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 3

Description of the Financial Assistance Programme

3.1 PROGRAMME PROCEDURES

The main reason for choosing Paparua Prison in Christchurch for the pilot programme was that there was already a substantial scheme operating there which helped prisoners apply for the unemployment benefit.

Building on this, the main components of the pilot programme as initially implemented were:

- (i) A pre-release meeting was held at the prison on every third Tuesday of the month for all prisoners being released the following month. This meeting was attended by representatives of the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, the Probation Service and PARS. The procedures for applying for benefits were explained to the prisoners and information was given about other forms of help available from the various organisations. The prisoners were also given the chance to discuss on a one-to-one basis what assistance is available to meet their particular needs.
- (ii) The next day (every third Wednesday), a PARS officer returned to the prison to help prisoners who intended to live in Christchurch to apply for the unemployment benefit by completing a package of forms:

- unemployment "job seeker" form
- unemployment benefit application form
- unemployment benefit application interview
- authority form for direct credit to bank
- inland revenue form (IR12)

For the duration of the pilot period, a Social Welfare field officer also attended to coach the PARS officer in the interview requirements. An abridged interview form was designed specifically for ex-prisoner applicants.

- (iii) The PARS officer lodged completed forms with the Departments of Labour and Social Welfare prior to the prisoner's release. The unemployment benefit application was made as of the day of lodging.
- (iv) On release, the prisoner went to the Department of Social Welfare. Once identified as a released prisoner (by means of his "Steps to Freedom" form), he was dealt with by an experienced section clerk, with responsibility for ex-prisoners' applications.

Prior to the pilot programme, the Christchurch scheme consisted of the first component plus the completion of the unemployment benefit application form which was held by the prisoner ready for his release. Components ii, iii and iv were new to the pilot programme. The important effects expected to flow from these were to encourage prisoners to make unemployment benefit applications, to have applications processed prior to release so that benefits could be available as soon as possible after release, and to reduce prisoner and staff frustrations by having the prisoner visit the Social Welfare office once only and by his dealing with an experienced clerk who was familiar with the application.

In terms of the goals and objectives, the above procedures were means for effecting operational objectives 9, 10, 11 and 15, (p. 2).

Reference to these procedures and to the goals and objectives identified the following operational aspects for monitoring:

- eligibility for the programme
- intake into the programme
- conduct of meetings
- outcomes of meetings

3.2 ELIGIBILITY

At the first meeting of the Christchurch organisers it was decided that the special procedures of the pilot programme could apply only to prisoners who intended to live in Christchurch* when released. Table 1 shows the number of prisoners released and the number and percentage eligible for the pilot programme according to this definition. Over the total period 63% were eligible.

Table 1 : Number of Prisoners Released and Number Eligible for the Pilot Programme

1983	No. Released	No. Eligible	% Eligible
October	34	25	74
November	38	20	53
December	30	19	63
TOTAL	102	64	63

* See appendix 1 for an explanation of ascertaining the intended destination of prisoners.

Table 2 shows how widely dispersed the destinations were for those who did not live in Christchurch.

Table 2 : Destinations of Prisoners Not Eligible for the Pilot Programme

Destination	Number
Te Kuiti	1
Rotorua	1
Palmerston North	1
Lower Hutt	1
Wellington	7
Blenheim	1
Nelson	2
Motueka	1
Murchison	1
Greymouth	2
Hokitika	1
Queenstown	1
Ashburton	2
Timaru	11
Invercargill	3
Deported	1
TOTAL	37

3.3 INTAKE

As was the case prior to the pilot programme, the Tuesday meeting continued to present relevant information to all prisoners about to be released, not just those eligible for the pilot programme. Attendance was voluntary. During the pilot period, an average of 63% of all prisoners and 69% of eligible prisoners attended the Tuesday meeting. There was no significant difference in attendance rate from month to month (table 3).

Table 3 : Attendance at the Tuesday Meeting

	No. Released	Attended Meeting	
		No.	%
<u>ALL PRISONERS *</u>			
October	34	21	62
November	38	23	61
December	30	20	67
TOTAL	102	64	63
<u>ELIGIBLE PRISONERS **</u>			
October	25	16	64
November	20	14	70
December	19	14	74
TOTAL	64	44	69

* ($\chi^2 = 0.27$, d.f = 2, n.s.)

** ($\chi^2 = 0.48$, d.f = 2, n.s.)

The Wednesday meeting was a new element introduced by the pilot programme and was specifically designed to help prisoners who qualified for the pilot programme. Table 4 shows that the attendance rate differed over the three months and that the 85% attendance rate in November was significantly higher than October's 40% and December's 58%.

Of the 44 eligible prisoners who attended Tuesday's meeting, 31 (70%) returned to Wednesday's meeting. Seven prisoners who did not attend on the Tuesday, did turn up to the Wednesday meeting.

Table 4 : Attendance at the Wednesday Meeting

Eligible Prisoners	No. Released	Attended Meeting	
		No.	%
October	25	10	40
November	20	17	85
December	19	11	58
TOTAL	64	38	59

($\chi^2 = 9.23$, d.f = 2, $p < 0.01$.)

Different methods were tried to inform prisoners of the meetings and to encourage their attendance. For October's releases a general notice stating the purpose, time and place of meeting was posted on the wing noticeboard before the meeting on 20 September. It was addressed to inmates being released in October but names were not listed. The next month a note was addressed to each named inmate to be released in November. Procedures for December's releases reverted to the general notice on the board. Although attendance at the Wednesday meeting increased markedly in November it did not for the Tuesday meeting. Another factor that seemed to influence attendance was work assignments. Working some distance from the prison buildings, at times presented difficulties or discouragement to attend. There did not seem to be any prison policy on trying to facilitate full attendance.

3.4 CONDUCT OF THE MEETINGS

As the previous section showed, the numbers attending meetings were not large and this allowed for an informal approach. For the first few meetings the venue varied (old hall, chapel), but it then settled into being the new visiting room which was relatively comfortable and well equipped with furniture.

The format of the Tuesday meeting was for each visitor to briefly describe what services and assistance they provided and how to go about getting them. Questions from prisoners were invited as speakers proceeded. The order of speakers was generally the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, Probation, and PARS. The evaluator also explained her presence and asked for comments. Most inmate interest related to previous or anticipated difficulties with the Department of Social Welfare. The tone of inmate comment varied from the quiet question to the vociferous complaint. After the group meeting, prisoners were invited to discuss their own situation with any of the visitors on an individual basis. The package of forms for application for the unemployment benefit was handed out to prisoners who qualified for the pilot programme.

On Wednesday, those who were eligible and who wished to participate returned to hand over completed applications or to receive assistance (on a one-to-one basis) in filling out the forms. All applicants had a shortened version of the interview that is necessary when applying for the unemployment benefit. The Department of Social Welfare had authorised the PARS officer to conduct these interviews.

One of the purposes of this evaluation is to assist in extending a financial assistance programme to other prisons. The following description of difficulties observed during the Paparua meetings is therefore given, not in order to be fault finding, but to help others involved in setting up similar programmes.

Given that the benefit system makes payments in arrears, and given inmates are not eligible for a benefit before they are released, it was evident that benefits could not be used to meet the need for money on the day of release. Special needs grants (SNGs) were the obvious stopgap and yet the emphasis placed on these during the meetings was insufficiently direct. If a prisoner lighted upon this as a topic for discussion, the responses were not encouraging. The message was that the amounts available are limited (\$30-\$40) and mostly they are to be recovered from later

benefit payments. This no doubt reflected the reality. But more importantly it highlighted the fact that the pilot programme concentrated on the unemployment benefit and not SNGs. This in turn reflected an early confusion about the objectives of the scheme (see appendix 1).

Getting prisoners congregated on Tuesdays and Wednesdays was an uncertain business. There was no definite starting time and it was a drawn out and time consuming affair. Groups of prisoners arrived at different times and so either held up the beginning of proceedings or arrived late and missed out on some information. This was due, in some part, to the fact that prisoners were working in different parts of the prison buildings and grounds.

The first Wednesday meeting was severely hampered by there being no tables or chairs to use when filling out application forms. This was rectified in later meetings, but setting up the furniture was always left for the visitors to arrange.

It was the intention that the Wednesday meeting would be conducted by one PARS officer. However for the duration of the pilot period, a Social Welfare Department field officer and the evaluator were also present. The former for training purposes and the latter for observation. With the help of all three, it still took all the available time to complete the task. It was too big a job for one PARS officer. Changes to programme procedures at the end of the pilot programme averted this problem. These changes are described in chapter 7.

3.5 OUTCOMES OF MEETINGS - APPLICATIONS FOR THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

The main purpose of the Wednesday meeting was to complete application forms for the unemployment benefit and to conduct the interviews associated with this. Applications for other benefits (e.g. sickness and/or accommodation) or for SNGs were not taken at that time, but were to wait for the prisoner's visit to the Department of Social Welfare office once released.

Table 5 shows that 80% (51) of the pilot programme prisoners applied for the unemployment benefit.

Table 5 : Number of Unemployment Benefit Applications from Pilot Prisoners

	No. Eligible	Applications No.	%
October	25	20	80
November	20	17	85
December	19	14	74
TOTAL	64	51	80

Attendance at the Tuesday meeting was not related to a greater rate of application ($\chi^2 = .07$, d.f. = 1, n.s.) : 82% of those who attended made an application compared with 75% of those who did not attend ; but attendance at the Wednesday meeting was ($\chi^2 = 10.81$, d.f. = 1, $p < 0.01$.): 94% of those who attended compared with 65% of those who did not attend.

Those who attended and applied did not receive their first payment significantly more quickly than those who did not attend and applied – a median of 8 days and 8.5 days respectively (MWU, $Z = 1.82$, n.s.).

There was no significant difference between the initial financial situation of those who applied and those who did not. The former had on average (median) \$24 total and \$15 in their hand when they left prison and the latter had \$30 and \$16 respectively. (Total : MWU, $Z = .25$, n.s. ; In hand : MWU, $Z = .43$, n.s.). None of them, whether they applied for a benefit or not, had work waiting for them and similar proportions (82% and 85%) had no accommodation arranged.

3.6 SUMMARY

Eligibility

63% of released prisoners were eligible for the pilot programme. An important limitation placed on the pilot programme before its implementation was that the special procedures were restricted to prisoners who were intending to live in Christchurch. The rationale for this was that only the Christchurch district office of the Department of Social Welfare was involved and that it did not have the authority to act on behalf of other districts. The unfortunate consequence of this was that the pilot programme could not test procedures for handling the recognised complexity of cases where prisoners were moving around the country.

Intake

One of the operational objectives (number 9) was to hold monthly pre-release meetings which inform prisoners who were to be released during the next month of services and assistance available. A meeting was held on the third Tuesday of each month and all prisoners being released could take advantage of the information provided at that meeting. In fact, only 63% attended the meeting, leaving 37% uninformed by this means. The Wednesday meeting was designed for prisoners eligible for the pilot programme. It was another opportunity for providing information but more importantly it was a means to have applications actually completed to an acceptable standard (objective 10) and lodged with the Department of Social Welfare prior to the prisoner's release (objective 11). Overall only 59% attended on Wednesday, though this fluctuated markedly from month to month.

Conduct of Meetings

The informal nature of the meetings was suitable for the occasion, though there was room for more co-ordination in terms of getting prisoners to the Tuesday meeting at an appointed time. Given that one of the main objectives of the pilot programme was to have financial assistance available on the day of release, information about SNGs was insufficiently directed and encouraging.

Outcomes

Even though only 59% of the prisoners eligible for the pilot programme attended the Wednesday meeting, 80% eventually applied for the unemployment benefit. However, those who did attend were more likely to apply for the benefit than those who did not attend. It was also found that those who did not apply did not have more money, or work or accommodation arranged more often than those who did apply. On the face of it, without knowing their plans once released, it would seem those who did not apply for a benefit would have benefited from attending the Wednesday meeting and subsequent benefit application.

CHAPTER 4

The Effect of the Pilot Programme on the Ex-Prisoner's Financial Position (Goal 2)

The main object of this evaluation is goal 2 of the pilot financial assistance programme :

"To have a realistic amount of money available to prisoners on the day of release to meet their immediate needs"

Objectives 5-7 and operational objectives 9-14 are associated with this goal (p. 2).

In order to help assess whether the pilot programme had an effect on the financial position of prisoners, the position of prisoners eligible for the pilot programme is compared with that of a similar group of prisoners who did not have the benefit of the pilot programme. These were prisoners released during the three months prior to the pilot programme (July to September 1983) and who intended to live in Christchurch.

The contribution made by each source of money and assistance is discussed in turn: total money owing to the prisoner when he left prison and whether this was cash he brought with him, prison earnings or gratuity; probation imprest account loans; PARS assistance; the unemployment benefit; sickness benefit; accommodation benefit; SNGs; and finally a summary measure of the amount of money he had in his hand on the day released.

4.1 AMOUNT OF MONEY AVAILABLE AT TIME OF RELEASE

When a prisoner is released, his money is handed to him as he leaves. This sum can be made up of several components : money he had on his person when received into prison, prison earnings, work parole wages, a gratuity. If the prisoner is released on probation, some of his prison and work parole earnings is usually forwarded to the probation office for payment. In other words, he receives only some of his money in cash in his hand as he leaves prison.

Total money owing from prison on release

The amount of money men had owing to them when they left prison was very small – more than half of them had less than \$27, some as little as \$3. There was no significant difference in the median amount between the pilot and non-pilot groups (table 6).

Table 6 : Total Money Owing from Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	3	226	35	24	64
Non-Pilot Prisoners	3	610	46	27	63 *

(MWU, $Z = 0.02$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

For the pilot prisoners there was a strong correlation between the length of time spent in prison and the amount of money they had when released – the longer in, the more money ($r = .75$). This relationship was similar but not so strong in the non-pilot group ($r = .49$). Table 7 shows the median amount of total money for each group according to length of time actually spent in prison. There was no significant difference in the median length of time spent in prison by the two groups: it was 4 months 15 days for the pilot prisoners and 6 months 4 days for the non-pilot prisoners (MWU, $Z = 0.67$, n.s.)

Table 7 : Total Money Owing from Prison According to Length of Time in Prison

Time Spent in Prison	Total Money Owing (Median)			
	Pilot Prisoners	(n)	Non-Pilot Prisoners	(n)
4 weeks or less	\$15.50	(2)	\$4.00	(7)
Over 4 weeks to 12 weeks	\$8.50	(12)	\$10.00	(12)
Over 12 weeks to 6 months	\$24.00	(31)	\$19.00	(11)
Over 6 months	\$41.50	(19)	\$45.00	(33)

Money in hand as leave prison

59% (38) of the pilot group and 53% (34) of the non-pilot group were released on probation. The general rule at Paparua is to hand the parolee \$15 of his prison earnings when he leaves and to send the balance to his probation officer for collection. On average the parolees of the pilot group left prison with 69% of their total money in hand.

This process substantially decreased the median amount of money all prisoners actually held as they left prison. Half of them had \$17 or less. There was no significant difference between the pilot and non-pilot groups in this respect (table 8).

Table 8 : Money in Hand as Leave Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	3	121	22	15	64
Non-Pilot Prisoners	3	127	23	17	63 *

(MWU, $Z = 0.08$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

Cash in hand on leaving prison was made up of the following components :

Cash brought to prison : The pilot prisoners had \$2 cash remaining (median). Non-pilot prisoners had \$5 (median). This difference was not significant (MWU, $Z = .99$, n.s.).

Prison earnings : The pilot prisoners left with \$21 of prison earnings (median). The non-pilot prisoners left with \$20 earnings (median). This difference was not significant (MWU, $Z = .34$, n.s.).

Gratuities : Three of the pilot prisoners and 6 of the non-pilot prisoners left prison with a gratuity payment from the prison - ranging from \$1 to \$3. Gratuities were paid only to those who had less than \$3. If an inmate had no money, he was given the maximum allowable gratuity, i.e. \$3. If he had some money of his own, say \$2, he was given a gratuity, in this case \$1, to make his funds up to \$3.

Work parole : Prisoners who were released on work parole were not included in the survey as they are sometimes released from a pre-release hostel and so not eligible for the pilot programme. Few Paparua prisoners are released on work parole. There were 45 approvals for work release in 1983 but only 17 began work.

4.2 PROBATION IMPREST ACCOUNT LOANS

One source of money for parolees is a loan from the probation office imprest account. Such a loan is considered a "last resort" when funds from SNGs or PARS are not available. The maximum loan is \$80 and is for the purpose of paying immediate personal living expenses, purchase of working clothes or tools of trade, or payment of fares to place of employment. (Probation Manual, 1984, F.8).

Number of Loans

Probation loans were not widely used and the pilot group did not receive them significantly more (26%) than the non-pilot group (18%) (table 9).

Table 9 : Number of Probation Imprest Account Loans

	No. on Probation	Receiving Loan No. %	
Pilot Prisoners	38	10 *	26
Non-Pilot Prisoners	34	6 *	18

($\chi^2 = 0.39$, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

* 2 of whom received two loans each.

Amount of Loans

The amount of the loans was not large, ranging from \$10 to \$90 *. The median loan was \$20 for the pilot group and \$30 for the non-pilot group. Although this difference was not statistically significant, there was a substantial difference in the monetary values (table 10).

Table 10 : Amount of Probation Loans (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	10	80	34	20	10
Non-Pilot Prisoners	20	90	42	37	6

(MWU, $Z = .99$, n.s.)

* This is the total amount of two loans made to one person.

Time Between Release and Getting Probation Loan

The median time elapsed between release and receiving a loan was 6 days for the pilot group and 2 days for the non-pilot group. Although this difference was not statistically significant, it was substantially different in terms of the times involved (table II).

Table II : Time from Release to Receiving Probation Loan (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	same day	27	8	6	10
Non-Pilot Prisoners	same day	8	3	2	6

(MWU, $Z = 0.77$, n.s.)

Repayment of Loans

None of the loans made during the pilot period had been repaid at the time of data collection, though not much time had elapsed in some cases. Three of the 6 made in the non-pilot period had been repaid.

4.3 ASSISTANCE FROM THE PRISONERS' AID AND REHABILITATION SOCIETY

PARS is another source of assistance for released inmates. PARS prefers to give assistance in kind rather than loans/gifts of money. Assistance given to prisoners released during October to December 1983 by the Christchurch PARS office is set out in table 12.

Table 12: Type of Assistance Given by PARS

	October	November	December
Clothing	7	1	1
Accommodation	7	2	1
Grocery Voucher	3	1	4
Household Goods	2	0	2
Electricity Bond	0	0	1
Employment	1	0	0
Alcohol Treatment Referral	3	0	0
Benefit Advice	6	2	0
Benefit Advice Re Bonds	2	0	1
TOTAL	31	6	10

4.4 ASSISTANCE FROM THE BENEFIT SYSTEM

The pilot programme was aimed at maximising the benefits for ex-prisoners available through benefits and grants administered by the Department of Social Welfare. This section presents comparative data on the benefits applied for and granted, their amount and when the money from benefits was available for ex-prisoners. As reported previously, none of the prisoners in the pilot programme had employment waiting for them and so the unemployment benefit was the main benefit involved.

Table 13: Number of Benefit Applications

Benefit	Pilot Prisoners (n = 64)	Non-Pilot Prisoners (n = 64)
Unemployment	51	50
Sickness	1	6
Accommodation	4	7
Special Needs Grant	29	32

4.5 THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

Applications and Grants

Table 14 shows that there was no difference in the rate of application for or grant of unemployment benefits between the pilot and non-pilot groups of prisoners. 80% of pilot prisoners and 78% of non-pilot applied, and 77% in both cases were granted benefits.

Table 14 : Unemployment Benefit Applications and Grants

	Total No. Prisoners	Applications No.	%	Grants No.	%
Pilot Prisoners	64	51	80	49	77
Non-Pilot Prisoners	64	50	78	49	77

A main ingredient of the pilot programme was for unemployment benefit applications to be made before the prisoner was released. Consequently this had a significant effect on the time between release and lodging the application. Most applications of the pilot group were made at least 19 days before release compared with 1 day after release of the non-pilot group.

Table 15 : Time Between Release and Unemployment Benefit Application (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	-42	20	-15	-19	51
Non-Pilot Prisoners	same day	21	2	1	50

(MWU, $Z = 5.70$, $p < .0001$.)

Time from Release to Receiving Unemployment Benefit

Department of Social Welfare policy is that the period one must 'standdown' between applying and qualifying for the unemployment benefit is waived for persons recently released from prison. The standdown was waived for all but one of the pilot group and for all the non-pilot group.

Despite this, not all unemployment benefits were effective from the day of release. For 92% of the pilot group and 82% of the non-pilot group, the benefit was effective from the day of release. There was no significant difference between the two groups in the time from release to the date on which the benefit became effective (MWU, $Z = 1.48$, n.s.).

The most important indicator in this context is the time from the day of release to actually receiving the first unemployment benefit payment. As shown in table 16 the pilot group received their first payment significantly sooner than the non-pilot group. The median time for the pilot group was 8 days compared with 9.5 for the non-pilot group. 59% of the pilot group and 38% of the non-pilot group were paid within eight days of release.

Table 16 : Time from Release to First Unemployment Benefit Payment (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	3	36	10	8	49
Non-Pilot Prisoners	8	29	12	9.5	49

(MWU, $Z = 2.78$, $p = 0.025$)

Amount of Unemployment Benefit

The unemployment benefit rates did not change during the pilot period, but they did change early in the non-pilot period on 20 July 1983. The earlier standard taxed

rate was \$57.46 for single persons under 20 years old and \$75.45 for single persons 20 years or more. The respective rates during the pilot period were \$58.46 and \$76.80. The rate for the few persons with dependants was higher.

More important than the standard rate for this exercise is the actual amount of the first benefit payment. In most cases this is less than the standard amount. There are a number of reasons for this : the first payment does not cover a full week (the benefit week is Monday – Friday paid one week in arrears on the next Thursday; deduction of debts to the Department of Social Welfare ; deduction of recoverable SNGs made since release. The first payment can also be more than the standard when it takes some weeks for payments to come through and so arrears are included.

A consequence of earlier payment is a lesser payment because it covers a shorter period. The quicker payment for pilot prisoners was reflected in their median first payment. The first payment was 40% less than the standard rate for the pilot group and 21% less for the non-pilot group. There was no statistically significant difference in the amount of the first payment between the pilot and non-pilot groups. Despite this, the difference in monetary values was substantial. For the pilot group the median first payment was \$46 ; for the non-pilot group the median was \$60 (table 17).

Table 17 : Amount of First Unemployment Benefit Payment (\$, taxed)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	26	248	70	46	49
Non-Pilot Prisoners	5	139	66	60	49

(MWU, $Z = 0.21$ n.s.)

4.6 THE SICKNESS BENEFIT

A few ex-prisoners qualified for a sickness benefit rather than the unemployment benefit. There was one such person in the pilot group. His standard benefit was \$89.64, his first payment was \$52.54 and it was paid 11 days after his release. There were 6 people in the non-pilot group who received sickness benefits. All these were for \$89.64 net per week, except one which was for \$88.06. The median first payment was \$99.63. The median time for payment was 24 days.

4.7 THE ACCOMMODATION BENEFIT

An accommodation benefit can be paid in addition to an unemployment or sickness benefit. Three of the pilot group and 6 of the non-pilot group received an accommodation benefit.

The 3 pilot accommodation benefits were for \$10, \$18 and \$22 per week. It took 8, 37 and 43 days for them to be paid. The range for the 6 non-pilot benefits was \$7 to \$22 per week, the median being \$11. Payment ranged from 8 to 58 days, the median being 26 days after release.

4.8 SPECIAL NEEDS GRANTS

59% of pilot prisoners who received a benefit had to wait 8 days and 41% had to wait longer for their benefit payment. The maximum was 54 days. The SNG is one possibility for filling this gap. Greater use of SNGs where appropriate was one of the aims of the pilot programme.

Number of SNGs

There was no significant difference in the rate of receiving SNGs between the two groups. 45% of the pilot and 50% of the non-pilot group were granted one (table 18). Mostly a person received one SNG, though the occasional person received two or three grants.

Although it need not be the case, all but one of the non-pilot SNG recipients also eventually received a benefit.

Table 18 : Number of SNGs

	Prisoners Released	Prisoners with SNG	% With SNG	No. SNGs per person			Tot. No. SNGs
				1	2	3	
Pilot Prisoners	64	29	45	24	4	1	35
Non-Pilot Prisoners	64	32	50	27	5	0	37

($\chi^2 = 0.13$, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

SNGs are granted to meet a specific need. The needs of these prisoners are set out in table 19. A general, destitute, ex-prisoner condition was the most usual reason given. The most frequent specific needs mentioned were accommodation and food costs.

Table 19 : The Need for Which SNG Granted

Need	Pilot Prisoners	Non-Pilot Prisoners
Ex-Prisoner	3	4
Destitute, no money	16	14
Food	5	5
Accommodation (Rent, Board, Bond)	8	7
General Living	2	5
Advance on Benefit	0	1
Travel Expenses	1	0
Don't Know	0	1
TOTAL	35	37

Recoverable or Not

SNGs can be granted on the condition that the recipient repays it (recoverable) or as a non-recoverable grant. Although more of the pilot grants were non-recoverable (60%) compared with the non-pilot grants (46%), this difference was not statistically significant (table 20).

Table 20 : SNGs Recoverable or Non-Recoverable

Need	Pilot Prisoners		Non-Pilot Prisoners	
	No.	%	No.	%
Recoverable	14	40	20	54
Non-recoverable	21	60	17	46
TOTAL	35	100	37	100

($\chi^2 = 0.94$, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

Amount of SNGs

The amount of the pilot SNGs ranged from \$10 to \$100 with the median being \$31 and \$30 the most frequent amount. The amount of the non-pilot SNGs ranged from \$15 to \$201, with the median being \$22 and \$20 the most frequent. The amount of SNGs was significantly larger for the pilot prisoners (table 21).

Table 21 : Amount of First SNG (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	10	100	36	31	29
Non-Pilot Prisoners	15	201	33	22	32

(MWU, $Z = 2.02$, $p < .05$)

Time Between Release and First SNG Payment

Most (52%) pilot SNGs were granted on the day of release, whereas non-pilot SNGs tended to be spread over a number of days, particularly the first 3, after release. The respective medians were the same day and 1 day later. There was no significant difference in the time taken to get an SNG (table 22).

Table 22 : Time from Release to First SNG (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	same day	14	2	same day	29
Non-Pilot Prisoners	same day	11	2	1	31

(MWU, $Z = 1.04$, n.s.)

4.9 TOTAL MONEY IN HAND ON DAY OF RELEASE

This section summarises the total money the prisoner had in his hand from the various sources recorded in this survey on the day he was released : cash taken to prison and prison earnings handed to him on release, money collected from probation on the day of release, and SNGs granted on the day of release.

There was no significant difference between the pilot and non-pilot groups in the median amount of total money in hand : \$26 and \$28 respectively (table 23). In both cases, the extra sources of finance (probation and SNGs) added \$11 to the median amount of money prisoners had as they left prison.

Table 23 : Total Money in Hand from All Sources on Day of Release (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	3	121	34	26	64
Non-Pilot Prisoners	3	609	49	28	63

(MWU, $Z = .57$, n.s.)

4.10 SUMMARY

Pilot prisoners differed significantly from non-pilot prisoners in respect of :

- (i) The time between release and unemployment benefit application. The median for pilot prisoners was 19 days before release compared with 1 day after release for non-pilot prisoners.
- (ii) The time between release and first unemployment benefit payment. The median for pilot prisoners was 8 days after release compared with 9.5 days after for non-pilot prisoners.
- (iii) The amount of the first SNG. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$31 compared with \$22 for non-pilot prisoners.

Pilot prisoners did not differ significantly from non-pilot prisoners in the following respects :

- (i) The total amount of money owing from the prison when released. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$24.
- (ii) The amount of money in hand as they left prison. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$15.
- (iii) The percentage who received a probation imprest account loan, its amount and the time between release and receiving it. 26% of pilot prisoners received a probation loan, the median amount being \$20, after a median period of 6 days.
- (iv) The percentage who received an unemployment benefit. 77% of the pilot prisoners received an unemployment benefit.

- (v) The amount of the first unemployment benefit payment. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$46.
- (vi) The percentage who received and the time between release and receiving an SNG. 45% of the pilot prisoners received an SNG, usually on the same day as release.
- (vii) The proportion of SNGs granted as non-recoverable. 60% of the pilot SNGs were non-recoverable.
- (viii) The amount of money in hand from a number of sources on the day of release. The median amount for pilot prisoners was \$26.

4.11 CONCLUSIONS

Did the Pilot Programme Achieve Goal 2?

Goal 2 of the pilot programme refers to prisoners having a "realistic amount" of money on the day they are released. "Realistic" was not operationally defined for the pilot project. For the purposes of drawing conclusions about the pilot programme's effectiveness, the pilot prisoners' financial outcomes are measured against a variety of standards.

The first two measures are relative. That is, the pilot programme should at the very least improve the financial position of released prisoners. The last two measures involve a couple of absolute standards for a "realistic amount".

- (i) How did the pilot prisoners' position compare with the 'control' non-pilot prisoners'?

The results show that the pilot group differed in only three respects: their unemployment benefit application was lodged sooner ; they received their first unemployment benefit sooner ; and they received more for an SNG if they were granted one. The first, lodging the

application, is no benefit of itself, but only if it leads to other improvements. The quicker receipt of the first payment could be associated with this earlier lodging, but it is also very much dictated by the fact that payments are made on Thursdays and that prisoners are released on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. That payment was significantly sooner is a positive result but it is still 8 days at the earliest after release (only 3 were quicker than this). An important positive result is that SNGs were higher. However the median grant was only \$31.

In a number of important respects, the pilot programme effected no change : the percentage receiving an unemployment benefit, the amount of the first unemployment benefit payment, the percentage receiving an SNG, and the proportion of SNGs that were non-recoverable.

- (ii) The need for an increase in the amount of money prisoners have when they are released was demonstrated in a survey preliminary to implementing the pilot programme at Paparua. A 1981 sample of prisoners from all New Zealand prisons who had sentences of 12 months or less imprisonment (Department of Justice, 1982) showed that

- (a) 75% were discharged with less than \$40
- (b) 50% were discharged with less than \$30

This was considered inadequate. Did the pilot prisoners fare better?

A comparison with pilot prisoners (those who served 12 months or less) showed

- (a) 82% were discharged with less than \$40.
- (b) 68% were discharged with less than \$30.

A lack of improvement was not unexpected as there was nothing in the pilot programme aimed at increasing the amount of money accumulated while in prison.

An SNG granted on the day of release was the method adopted by the pilot programme to improve this situation. 57 of the 64 pilot prisoners served 12 months or less, 28 of whom received an SNG. 14 of them got it the day they were released. When all the various sources (prison earnings and cash handed to him when leaving, prison earnings collected from probation, SNGs) are taken into account, results show that of those prisoners who served 12 months or less

- (a) 72% had less than \$40 in hand on the day of release.
- (b) 60% had less than \$30 in hand on the day of release.

The addition of SNGs is no improvement on the 1981 situation. A very large proportion of prisoners still have very little money on the day they are released.

- (iii) How did pilot prisoners' financial situation compare with the unemployment rate?

The weekly, taxed unemployment benefit rate for single persons was \$76.80. On the day of release only 9% of the pilot prisoners had \$76.80 or more owing to them from the prison. When all sources, including SNGs, were taken into account still only 9% had at least \$76.80 in the hand. To put this in the context of a weekly payment, it may assist to know that all but one of those who received an unemployment benefit had to wait at least seven days for their first payment. Apart from the 15 who received an SNG on the day they were released, another 9 received one within a week of release.

Ex-prisoners' financial position is very poor by comparison with the unemployment benefit rate.

- (iv) Over the years there has been considerable discussion as to exactly how much a released prisoner needs if he is to find and set up accommodation (rent/board in advance, bond, keymoney, electricity bond, groceries), work clothing, and transport.

The Penal Policy Review Committee stated that "a prisoner must have adequate funds for his immediate maintenance on discharge" (1981, p.104). In July 1982, the Steering Committee of the Penal Policy Review within the Department of Justice put this at \$300. Estimates from probation officers and PARS officers around the country in 1981 were between \$100 and \$200 if the person was living independently. A 1983 estimate from Wanganui was that these costs can be up to \$300.

These costs are high and it is evident that the median \$26 that prisoners have in their hand on the day they are released is completely inadequate and unrealistic. This was not significantly supplemented from other sources during the first week out.

The overall conclusion is that the pilot programme did not ensure that prisoners had a realistic amount of money in order to meet their immediate needs on the day of release.

Were the operational objectives achieved?

How does the non-achievement at goal level relate to activities at the objective level? The objectives of the pilot programme aimed at ensuring prisoners had a "realistic amount of money" were numbers 5 - 7 :

5. To ensure prisoners are aware of services and assistance available on release.
6. To have Department of Social Welfare financial assistance (if eligible) available on the day of release.

7. To ensure that the maximum amount of assistance available under the Department of Social Welfare benefits system is granted to help cover individual ex-prisoner's immediate needs (e.g. accommodation, food).

In turn the operational objectives developed to implement these were numbers 9 - 14 (p. 2).

Running through the relevant operational objectives we know that monthly pre-release meetings were held but with an overall attendance rate of 63%, or if confined to prisoners eligible for the pilot programme, 69% (operational objective 9). Thus a large proportion did not have the benefit of these meetings. The level of knowledge of the non-attenders is not known.

We know that the unemployment benefit applications of those who attended the Wednesday meeting were up to standard, lodged with and accepted by the Department of Social Welfare prior to the prisoners' release (operational objectives 10 and 11).

We know that for all but one of the pilot prisoners granted an unemployment benefit, the benefit was effective from the day of release (operational objective 12) and that for most (84%) the first payment was made in the least possible time of 8 - 10 days (operational objective 13). Depending whether a prisoner is released on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, an 8 - 10 day gap is unavoidable in the unemployment benefit system and this is where concentrated efforts were needed. The only formal, generally available avenue to fill this gap is an SNG. Only 45% of pilot prisoners were granted an SNG. Most of these (52%) were paid on the day the prisoner was released, but this amounts to only 23% of eligible prisoners (operational objective 14). For those who did receive an SNG, the average grant was only \$31.

Although it was appreciated that it takes at least 8 days for an unemployment benefit to be paid, the pilot programme concentrated on improving the unemployment benefit situation. And it achieved this, reducing the median time

for payment from 9.5 to 8 days. Because of the virtually inevitable 8 day period, more emphasis should have been placed on alternative sources of finance, particularly SNGs. The possibility of an SNG was not systematically incorporated into the pilot programme. It was spoken of during pre-release meetings but not in an encouraging way and prisoners were apt to recall the paltry amounts received previously and how it was recovered from subsequent benefit payments. There was no preparation or application for SNGs prior to release. It was left for when the prisoner visited the Department of Social Welfare once released. It was the intention of the scheme that Social Welfare staff would raise the question of an SNG in individual cases. The system relies on individuals presenting their own case and it has been pointed out that prisoners, on the whole, are not particularly skilled at this sort of negotiation. The Department of Social Welfare has commented on the surprisingly low amounts requested. Since the end of the pilot programme SNG policy has changed substantially. The implications of this are discussed in chapter 7.

The one operational objective that was substantially not achieved was number 14, i.e. having SNGs available on the day of release. The system does provide for SNGs, but only 23% of the pilot prisoners received one on the first day of release. The reason for failure at the goal level is the lack of use of SNGs and this was because the pilot programme was misdirected. It concentrated on the unemployment benefit, when SNGs is where the potential for providing immediate and adequate funds lies.

CHAPTER 5

Reducing the Incidence of Reoffending Immediately Following Release Which Is Attributable to Lack of Money (Goal 1)

Despite it being the ultimate purpose of the pilot programme, this study does not evaluate the programme's effectiveness in reducing reoffending. The intensive follow-up of post-release circumstances and control of predisposing characteristics prior to the prison sentence that would be needed to do this could not be achieved in the time available. Descriptive data about the incidence of reoffending is presented.

The risk period is considered to be that immediately following release. For the purposes of this evaluation, reoffending behaviour was monitored for the four weeks following release. "Reoffending" is defined as a charge laid in court. All the charges that had been determined at the time of data collection had resulted in a conviction, though a few were still pending determination.

In order to put the pilot group's reoffending in some perspective, their comparison with the non-pilot group is continued.

5.1 THE INCIDENCE OF REOFFENDING WITHIN FOUR WEEKS OF RELEASE

16% of the pilot group and 17% of the non-pilot group reoffended within four weeks of release (table 24). This difference did not reach a significant level. In both groups the reoffenders averaged 2 reoffences each.

Table 24 : Reoffending Within 4 Weeks of Release

Need	Pilot Prisoners		Non-Pilot Prisoners	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reoffend	10	16	11	17
Not reoffend	54	84	53	83
TOTAL	64	100	64	100

($\chi^2 = .00$, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

5.2 TIME BETWEEN RELEASE AND REOFFENCE

There was no significant difference between the two groups in the time it took them to reoffend. The median time for the pilot group was 10.5 days and 14 days for the non-pilot group. Not many reoffended within the first week of release : 1 of the pilot group offended on the third day ; 1 of the non-pilot group offended on the day of release, 1 on the fourth, and 1 on the fifth day.

Table 25 : Time between Release and First Reoffence (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Pilot Prisoners	3	27	12.5	10.5	10
Non-Pilot Prisoners	same day	27	14	14	11

(MWU, $Z = .07$, n.s.)

5.3 REOFFENDING AND AMOUNT OF AVAILABLE MONEY

The basic hypothesis of the pilot project was that inadequate money on release encourages reoffending. Consequently it is posited that adequate money will discourage reoffending. This hypothesis cannot be tested here because the pilot programme did not result in the pilot prisoners having more money available than the non-pilot prisoners and the money they did have fell below the accepted level of "adequate". However, a rudimentary measure shows that ex-prisoners who reoffended did not have significantly less money than those who did not reoffend, and that both reoffenders and non-reoffenders had less than "adequate" (table 26). If \$76.80 (the unemployment benefit rate) is taken as the measure of adequacy, those with "inadequate" total money did not reoffend more than those with "adequate" money ($\chi^2 = .01$, d.f. = 1, n.s.). There were too few people with over \$300 to do a similar analysis at this level of "adequacy".

Table 26 : Money Available (median) to Reoffenders and Non-Reoffenders

	Pilot Prisoners		Non-Pilot Prisoners	
	Total Money	In Hand	Total Money	In Hand
Reoffenders	\$31	\$15	\$21	\$19
Non-Reoffenders	\$24	\$16	\$27	\$17

(Pilot, total money : MWU, $Z = .71$, n.s.; pilot, in hand : MWU, $Z = .26$, n.s.; Non-pilot, total money : MWU, $Z = .37$, n.s.; non-pilot, in hand : MWU, $Z = .50$, n.s.)

There was no significant difference between reoffenders and non-reoffenders as regards receiving SNGs. In the pilot group, 40% (4) of reoffenders and 46% (25) of non-reoffenders got an SNG ($\chi^2 = .00$, d.f. = 1, n.s.). In the non-pilot group, 56% (6) of reoffenders and 49% (26) of non-reoffenders got an SNG ($\chi^2 = .00$, d.f. = 1, n.s.).

5.4 TYPE OF REOFFENCE

There is implicit in the hypothesis the notion that offending for survival involves a property offence, i.e. acquiring money or goods for survival. It is also argued that not coping can manifest itself in other offending behaviour.

Property offending predominated, but was not out of proportion with property offending generally.

Table 27 : Type of Reoffence

Type of Reoffence	Pilot Prisoners	Non-Pilot Prisoners
Property :	7	6
Burglary >\$1,000	(0)	(1)
Burglary <\$100	(1)	(0)
Shoplifting >\$100	(1)	(0)
Shoplifting <\$100	(1)	(1)
False Pretences, Fraud	(1)	(1)
Unlawfully take/get into motor vehicle	(3)	(3)
Against the person	2*	1
Drugs	0	1*
Against Public Order	0	1
Driving	0	1
Other	1	1
TOTAL	10	11

* One person also convicted of theft (<\$100)

For the record : at the time of research 6 of the 10 pilot reoffenders and 9 of the 11 non-pilot reoffenders had been convicted for their reoffence. The remaining six charges were still pending. The penalties for the convictions are shown in table 28. The custodial sentences were given for assault with intent to injure, shoplifting (>\$100), credit by fraud, possession of drugs, and unlawfully taking and getting into motor vehicles.

Table 28 : Penalties for Reoffences

Penalty	Pilot Prisoners	Non-Pilot Prisoners
Custody	3	3
Periodic Detention	1	2
Fine	1	2
Other	0	2
Don't Know	1	0
TOTAL	6	9

5.5 CONCLUSION

16% of the pilot prisoners had reoffended within four weeks of being released and half of these were within 10 days. The pilot prisoners were not significantly different from the non-pilot prisoners in this respect.

The hypothesis that having adequate money discourages reoffending could not be tested as neither the pilot nor non-pilot group had "adequate" money. The reoffenders did not have significantly less money than those who did not reoffend.

CHAPTER 6

Reducing the Mutual Frustration Experienced by Released Prisoners and the Department of Social Welfare Staff in Their Dealings With Each Other (Goals 3&4)

Investigations prior to the pilot project identified problems for both the ex-prisoner and for Social Welfare counter staff when the ex-prisoner applies for a benefit. Frustrations and hassles on both parts are not uncommon complaints. More specifically, it was suggested that problems arise when the ex-prisoner arrives at the Department of Social Welfare without his "Steps to Freedom" form or any other document from prison or without the assistance of probation or PARS. It was also stated that some prisoners present themselves "in ways unlikely to elicit the full co-operation of counter staff" (Department of Justice, 1982).

Many of the operational features of the pilot scheme were aimed at relieving this situation :

- to ensure prisoners are aware of services and assistance available on release
- to minimise time spent by released prisoners on Social Welfare office premises by having forms completed before release and by needing only one visit to the office on release
- to use more experienced staff to ensure greater accuracy and better judgement in discretionary matters
- to have one designated experienced staff member primarily responsible for ex-prisoner applications
- to convey decisions on entitlement to clients at the time they present themselves after release

This aspect of the pilot project has not been evaluated empirically, except to the extent that we know 59% of the pilot group completed their applications before they were released. For these men at least, if they identified themselves as a released prisoner, less time would be spent at the Social Welfare office. Theoretically, they would not have been asked to wait or come back at an appointed time later in the day which was the usual procedure.

The normal means of identification is the "Steps to Freedom" form which notes how much money the prisoner had when he left prison and is signed by the prison. Of the 51 pilot prisoners who applied for the unemployment benefit, 36 presented the "Steps to Freedom" form or some other identification at the counter.

In this connection it should be noted that the local arrangement with the Department of Labour minimises problems and potential frustrations for released prisoners. The Department of Labour "job seeker" card is completed at the pre-release meeting and lodged with the Department before the prisoner is released. On release the prisoner is directed to the Department's "special duties" office where he is expected, thus avoiding the pressure of the main registration office.

The success of the pilot programme in reducing these problems was discussed at the meeting of all the parties involved in the scheme after its conclusion. The following evaluations were reported :

Department of Social Welfare :

- " - prompt disposal of applications
- considerably less contact between staff and releasees, resulting in less conflict and anxiety from the point of view of all parties

- use of graded staff in all contact situations ensured greater accuracy and adequacy of information obtained, better judgment being exercised in discretionary matters such as SNGs and, generally, the more efficient approach produced more satisfied customers."

Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society :

- completion of the detailed application form in prison is a form of preparation and education for release. It reduces stress associated with literacy problems and with bureaucratic contacts.

Probation :

- prisoners are relieved to have the application over and done with and it involves them in assistance for themselves.

In summary, the Department of Social Welfare reported that the procedures of the pilot scheme resulted in considerably less contact between their staff and released prisoners and that this in turn resulted in less conflict and anxiety for all parties. PARS and the Probation Service reported that completing benefit applications before release also reduced stress for the inmate. The views of the inmates were not canvassed.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion

Although the pilot programme was not successful in providing sufficiently for prisoners during the first days out, it was by no means a complete failure. The Christchurch organisations are to be congratulated for having reduced the waiting period for the first unemployment benefit payment to the minimum possible. Although not empirically tested, responses from around the country suggest that this is not always the case, and that it can take two to four weeks for benefits to be paid.

Another way in which the scheme has had an effect, an impression gained from comments made by the various participants, is that it has put the notion of financial assistance and the liaison between the organisations providing it on a formal basis and not purely dependent on the goodwill of the people involved.

A third benefit, which the pilot programme can probably claim some credit for, is changes to the local Social Welfare policy on SNGs. This is described in the next section.

Before concluding, a number of issues raised in the course of the pilot programme and its evaluation are recorded here to assist with the consideration of future policy and procedures.

7.1 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT PAPARUA PRISON SINCE THE PILOT PROJECT

In early March 1984 a meeting was held at Paparua Prison to review the pilot programme. It was attended by representatives of all the parties who participated in the pilot programme. It was agreed that the pilot had been a success and that the financial assistance programme should continue, but with certain modifications to overcome some procedural difficulties encountered. The main difficulty was the half day spent by one PARS and one Social Welfare officer at the monthly Wednesday meeting. Each organisation claimed they could not afford the time and withdrew their services after the pilot period. It was suggested that the prison could contribute to this part of the scheme.

Post-Pilot Programme Procedures

The most substantial change is that the monthly Wednesday meeting has been discontinued. Its purpose was to complete unemployment benefit applications to the required standard so that they could be lodged with the Department of Social Welfare prior to release. It was decided that prior lodging was not necessary for early payment of the benefit.

The monthly Tuesday pre-release meeting is held as it was previously. After the meeting, the Divisional Officer at Paparua Prison hands out the Department of Labour "job seeker" form and the unemployment benefit application form. The IRD form, bank authority and Social Welfare interview have been dispensed with at this stage. A newly designed unemployment benefit application form was introduced about this time and this is expected to make completion easier. Prison officers assist with completion if necessary or requested. The Department of Labour forms are retrieved from the prisoners, handed to the PARS field officer who forwards them to the Department of Labour. The prisoner holds on to the benefit application form and takes it with him to the Department of Social Welfare when released. The forms are distributed to prisoners intending to live in Christchurch, though if requested others receive them.

The review meeting decided that the new procedures would preserve those aspects of the pilot scheme that minimised contact between released prisoners and Social Welfare staff and which produced quick and accurate decisions about eligibility. Identification as a released prisoner (by "Steps to Freedom" form) ensures access to a senior officer. A slightly longer interview than under the pilot programme will ensue, but this should terminate with a date of eligibility and payment of benefit.

Two seemingly minor matters which can prolong proceedings with the Department of Social Welfare and which can result in the released prisoner having to make more than one visit to the Department, are one, the need for his Inland Revenue number, and, two, the need for a bank account and its verified number before he can apply for an unemployment benefit. The pilot programme canvassed these aspects but not particularly successfully. PARS attempted to get IRD numbers from the Inland Revenue Department but this took up to a week which delayed applications getting to Social Welfare. It was also a more onerous task than expected. The pilot programme did not tackle the question of getting verified bank account numbers. If the Department of Social Welfare has an existing file on an applicant, it will include his IRD number. Otherwise both items are now the responsibility of the prisoner to attend to while in prison if he can, or on release.

A Checklist

In response to one of the suggestions arising from the review meeting, a checklist of things to be done on release in order to apply for a benefit has been attached to the application form. This is in addition to and more specific than the general information included on the PARS "Steps to Freedom" form. The text of the checklist is :

In order to ensure prompt action on your application for Unemployment Benefit, the following steps should be taken on your release.

1. Report to the Department of Labour and obtain registration form E.S. 11.
2. Take this form to the Department of Social Welfare along with –
 - * Completed application form for Unemployment Benefit
 - * "Steps to Freedom" form
 - * Bank Book and Inland Revenue Department tax number (if available)
3. Identify yourself to the receptionist as being on release from prison. (This will ensure that your interview is done by a senior officer).
4. Where immediate financial help is required, please make this known to the interviewing officer.

Special Needs Grants

Another important development that occurred at the end of the pilot programme was changes in the local policy as regards SNGs. SNGs became more formalised in that a proper application form was introduced which was treated as an application in its own right. SNGs are still recoverable or non-recoverable at the discretion of the approving officer though the Office says there is a leaning to non-recoverable grants.

Conclusion

The crucial conclusion of the group involved in running the pilot programme was that the effort required to file the unemployment benefit application prior to release did not produce commensurate benefits. Indeed it seemed that as long as other aspects (e.g. preparation while in prison; experienced clerks at Social Welfare) were preserved, the prior filing achieved nothing. Similarly, the obstacles to frustration-free applications (e.g. not having IRD and bank account numbers) are present whether applications are filed prior to release or not.

There is no empirical assessment of how the new procedures are working. It needs to be recognised that at the prison end of the process, the system is now virtually as it was before the pilot programme. Any improvement at the moment depends on services provided by the Department of Social Welfare. Probation and PARS give

positive reports about these, saying that their impression is that SNGs are more readily available and for an increased amount. The question still remains whether the present arrangements facilitate achievement of the objective of adequate money on the day of release.

7.2 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT OTHER PRISONS

Paparua is not the only prison with a financial assistance programme. Brief descriptions of other schemes are given to assist with future plans.

Dunedin Prison also holds a monthly pre-release meeting for prisoners due for release the following month. Representatives of the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, Probation, PARS, and the Centre for Alcohol Related Disabilities attend. The meetings are of an open forum type and questions and comments from the floor are encouraged. Unemployment benefit forms are completed prior to release and taken by the prisoner to the Department of Social Welfare when released. An appointment is arranged for the prisoner at 10.30 a.m. on the day of release. The name of the Labour Department contact person is typed on the "Steps to Freedom" form. There are two activities at Dunedin not introduced at Christchurch. First, bank accounts are arranged prior to release if necessary. Secondly and more significantly, the Dunedin Department of Social Welfare has a policy of making up a prisoner's release funds to the level of the unemployment benefit (\$76.80). Whether this grant is recoverable or not is considered on the merits of the case.

Invercargill Youth Institution also holds a monthly pre-release meeting, attended by representatives of the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, and Probation and PARS. A package of forms for the unemployment benefit is completed prior to release.

Mt Eden Prison arranges its pre-release programme differently. PARS arranges regular Tuesday evening meetings over a four week period, each week dealing with a different topic:

- (i) The services offered by the Labour Department, led by the Senior Placements Officer of the Labour Department.
- (ii) Financial advice and assistance with budgetting and taxation applications led by a staff member of a firm of chartered accountants.
- (iii) The benefits available from the Social Welfare Department, led by the Auckland Assistant Director of Department of Social Welfare.
- (iv) Alcohol and Drug Abuse led by a counsellor from the Presbyterian Social Service Association.

An important initiative in the Auckland area is the Department of Labour's special officer who works full time with prison inmates with a view to finding them work parole or work once released. This officer reports that all clients are taken by him to all job interviews and some 30-40 men and women are usually placed each month. His services extend to Auckland Medium and Maximum prisons as well as Mt Eden.

Elements of the above programmes also exist at New Plymouth, Wellington, Wanganui and Christchurch Women's prisons.

7.3 PRISONERS MOVING TO ANOTHER LOCALITY ON RELEASE

It was recognised before the pilot programme was implemented that prisoners who intend to leave the area of the prison present extra problems for assistance, especially assistance deriving from the Department of Social Welfare. All schemes operating today depend on arrangements with the local office of the Department of Social Welfare which acts with relative autonomy within its statutory discretion

and which does not act on behalf of other districts. This is a particular problem for the isolated prisons (Rangipo, Tongariro, Waikane, Ohura), youth prisons, and women's prisons where a large proportion of prisoners come from and move back to other areas, at times quite distant. Responses from the prisons, probation and PARS stressed difficulties in harnessing Department of Labour and Department of Social Welfare personnel for information services for the isolated prisons.

It is unfortunate that the pilot programme did not test methods to overcome these problems because it was shown that prisoners released from Paparua during the pilot period, but not eligible for the pilot programme because of the residential qualification, fared worse than those who went through the pilot programme in one important respect – it took significantly longer for them to receive their first unemployment benefit payment. The median time was 10 days as opposed to 8 days (MWU, $Z = 2.05$, $p = 0.05$). More generally, the preliminary comparison that looked specifically at the differences related to place independently of the pilot programme showed that significantly fewer of those who shifted away from Christchurch applied for an unemployment benefit compared with those who stayed in Christchurch. (See appendix 2.)

Making arrangements with Social Welfare offices outside the prison region is being attempted at Dunedin Prison which is setting up liaison with the Timaru office and with branch offices in north, central and south Otago. However, if forwarding applications to other districts prior to release is impracticable, one advantage of a scheme which includes completing benefit applications prior to release but which does not lodge and process them prior to release (like the current Paparua scheme) is that all prisoners can participate and carry their completed applications to any part of New Zealand.

The Department of Social Welfare has agreed to consider appointing the superintendent of isolated prisons as its agent, if decisions prior to release are the best way to proceed.

7.4 EMPLOYMENT

The point was made by several people commenting on this pilot programme that employment for ex-prisoners is the crucial point, not financial assistance. This is so, but there are many ex-prisoners who are unemployed. The overall proportion is not known, but none of the pilot prisoners had work organised for them before they were released and 80% received an unemployment benefit. Even those with employment may need money to tide them over to their first pay.

In New Zealand the most widely available employment programme for prisoners is release to work towards the end of the sentence. Appropriate figures are not available to calculate a rate of prisoners applying for work parole but a relevant figure in this context is the proportion of those approved who actually commence work. In 1983, 76% of all those approved for work parole in New Zealand actually commenced work. This total figure masks great variation, from none at Auckland Medium, Rangipo and Waikeria prisons to 100% at Arohata, Dunedin, Mt Eden, Napier, New Plymouth and Wellington prisons. 38% of Christchurch Prison's approvals started work.

There are several local programmes aimed at improving the employment situation of prisoners, usually organised through probation and psychological services.

A 1978 review of employment programmes for prisoners in the USA (Toborg et al, 1978, p.xi) summarised the effectiveness of employment programmes thus:

Many programs assess the extent to which clients obtain jobs, and most report that the majority of clients are successfully placed. This finding is of limited value, however, because programs rarely compare the placement outcomes of their clients with those of similar individuals who did not receive program services. Therefore, the extent to which successful job placement should be attributed to the programs' interventions or to other causes cannot be determined...

A number of studies have documented that releasees' first jobs may be held only a short time and that ex-offenders placed in jobs through program assistance may leave them soon after. However, programs often do not analyse whether releasees become (and remain) unemployed or whether they obtain better jobs within a short time. Such information is crucial for adequate assessment of job stability outcomes...

Although the importance of job quality has been widely acknowledged, such quality is often difficult to assess. Consequently, few programs have analysed this characteristic.

Most programs assume that improving releasees' employment statuses will reduce their recidivism rates. Available analyses usually indicate that program clients experience lower rates of recidivism than are commonly thought to occur for ex-offenders as a whole. There has been much less analysis of the recidivism patterns (i.e., the frequency and severity of crimes committed) of program clients. Moreover, recidivism outcomes of program clients are rarely compared with those of similar groups of non-clients. Thus, little is known about the programs' influence on achieving improvements in client behaviour.

7.5 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Accommodation is a major item of anxiety and cost to a released inmate. Only 19% (12) of the pilot prisoners had accommodation arranged prior to leaving prison. Six were going to live with their parent(s), 4 with their wife or de facto, 1 with a girlfriend, and 1 at the city mission.

A number of comments from probation and PARS officers make the point that the amount of money a prisoner needs when he is released depends on his living arrangements. If he has no home and is setting up house this can be very expensive. Costs associated with setting up a flat can include rent in advance, bond, key money, and electricity bond. An estimate of these costs in Dunedin is \$200 for the first week, without taking into account food, bedding, cutlery etc. Low cost, boarding house accommodation was estimated as being between \$40 and \$50 in 1981.

Men returning to a wife who has been receiving the domestic purposes benefit are confronted by a problem peculiar to their situation. The practice is for the Department of Social Welfare to continue paying the Domestic Purposes Benefit

until the end of the four weekly pay period in which the prisoner is released. If the ex-prisoner applies for an unemployment benefit, adjustments are made to account for any overlap of the domestic purposes and unemployment benefits. Some men find it difficult to understand and accept this situation.

7.6 OVERSEAS EXPERIMENTS IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND RECIDIVISM

Although this study has not tackled the question of the relationship between lack of money and reoffending, it has been studied overseas, particularly in U.S.A. Overseas work shows that the financial position of prisoners in U.K. and U.S.A., as in New Zealand, is very poor (Lenihan, 1975; Corden et al, 1979; Texas Department of Corrections, 1976). There are two main pieces of work in this field both based on the fact of a demonstrated relationship between unemployment and recidivism (Toborg et al, 1978, p. ix). The two experiments take this further and assume a causal relationship between the two (U.S. Department of Labor, 1978; Stephens, 1978; Rossi et al, 1980). In these studies financial assistance is theoretically a substitute for employment, though they study the separate effects of financial aid and employment on recidivism. Both experiments were conducted under the auspices of the Department of Labor.

The first experiment was the Baltimore Living Insurance for Ex-Prisoners (LIFE) programme. (U.S. Department of Labor, 1978). Prisoners being released were randomly allocated to one of four groups:

- (i) Received both financial aid and the offer of a job placement service
- (ii) Received financial aid but no job placement assistance
- (iii) Were offered job placement service but no financial aid
- (iv) Received neither service

Financial aid consisted of 13 weeks of \$60 per week. Job placement included intensive job counselling and placement.

The results were that ex-prisoners receiving financial assistance were less likely to be rearrested for property-theft-related crimes than those who received only job placement or no services at all.

A separate analysis addressed the question of whether this reduction in recidivism and other benefits resulting from financial aid were large enough to justify the programme's costs. (Mallard and Thornton, 1978). Cost-benefit analyses were done from a number of perspectives. From the view of society as a whole it was concluded that the programme was "overwhelmingly favourable", that even by the most conservative estimate over four dollars of goods and services were generated for each dollar expended (p.2). From a budgetary perspective it was thought that the costs would probably be less than the total amount of government revenue generated by means of reduced costs in the criminal justice system and other social programmes and from increased tax revenue (p.3). It was also concluded that both citizens not eligible for the programme (ordinary taxpayers, the potential victims of crimes) and those receiving the financial aid (ex-inmates) benefited from the programme (p.3).

These LIFE results were encouraging but their force was tempered because first, only high-risk offenders were selected who were not representative of the full range of prisoners, and secondly, the experiment was administered by a research team whose members were devoted to the outcomes rather than by persons who would administer an ongoing programme (Rossi et al, 1980). To overcome these problems a second experiment was conducted in Texas and Georgia, called the Transitional Aid Research Project (TARP) (Stephens, 1978; Rossi et al, 1980). It covered the full range of prisoners typically in prison and was administered by the same sorts of state agencies that would if it were a statutory scheme. Prisoners were again randomly allocated to experimental and control groups :

- (i) Maximum weekly payment (according to State unemployment insurance rates) for 26 weeks and 100% tax (i.e. dollar for dollar reduction in benefit for earnings received).

- (ii) Maximum weekly payment for 13 weeks and 100% tax.
- (iii) Maximum weekly payment for 13 weeks and 25% tax.
- (iv) No payment. Job placement services available with up to \$100 grants for purchase of tools etc.
- (v) A control group, members of which were paid for giving three followup interviews.
- (vi) A control group, members of which were not interviewed.

The results of this experiment were:

- (i) Overall, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the average number of property-related arrests.
- (ii) There was no difference in other types of arrests.
- (iii) Persons who received payments worked for considerably less of the year than those in non-payment groups.
- (iv) There were no strong differences between groups in total annual earnings, suggesting that the experimental groups managed higher wages for their shorter working time.

It was concluded that the TARP experiment contained good and bad lessons. On the negative side, TARP payments, as administered, did not lower recidivism and TARP payments wielded a strong work-disincentive effect. On the positive side, TARP payments did not increase recidivism, despite the fact that they increased unemployment. This suggested and further analysis showed that TARP payments did reduce recidivism but these effects were counteracted by the fact that payments increased unemployment which in turn increased arrests.

The report concluded with the following policy implications. First, payments are useful in lowering recidivism. Second, such payments are likely to have attractive benefit-to-cost ratios, being relatively inexpensive and averting the greater costs of having additional prisoners. Third, the net effects of employment on rearrest are very strong and that properly administered employment schemes have great potential for high payoffs. However, it was noted that most employment strategies

have failed and an effective policy would probably be relatively expensive. They finally concluded that the positive effects of payment schemes could be fully captured if the work disincentives were stripped away. The previous LIFE experiment was cited as a success in this regard. Programmes suggested to achieve this included lowering the tax rebate rate; a move from the unemployment benefit model to a severance pay model, i.e. providing money to prisoners on release, either as a lump sum or in instalments; building in positive incentives for working such as bonuses. (Rossi et al, 1980).

7.7 EXTENDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS IN ALL NEW ZEALAND PRISONS

The purpose behind the Paparua pilot programme was to learn how best to extend financial assistance to all prisoners being released from New Zealand prisons. Lessons and suggestions arising from the pilot programme are introduced here.

Explicit formulation of the purpose of the programme

The purpose of the programme must be explicitly communicated to the people in the districts who are implementing the programme. And, consistent with a throughcare policy, the main purpose must be to assist the welfare of the prisoner.

Once this is recognised, the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved can be more clearly stated.

Given the emphasis on prisoner welfare, the main responsibility for a financial assistance programme should rest with the Department of Justice. In administrative terms the prison should be responsible for overseeing the programme and ensuring it is active and headed in the right direction. The prison's role should not be merely to provide the prisoners. Unfortunately the role of Paparua Prison in the pilot experience was very close to this with all the actual activities being provided by the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Labour, PARS, and the Probation Service.

Justice Department responsibility does not mean that minimising hassles between Department of Social Welfare staff and prisoners is not a legitimate concern. It is, in that this helps maximise accurate and expeditious decisions on financial assistance. It is also a side benefit for the Department of Social Welfare in its own right, but it must not be the sole emphasis of the programme.

Clear objectives from head office are necessary for the prisons and Social Welfare districts, especially where no local initiatives operate. They should not be so detailed that they stifle the initiatives that do exist. Returns from around the country show that there is a good deal of enthusiasm amongst people working with prisoners for this sort of programme.

Liaison between the Department of Justice, Department of Social Welfare and Others

There should be formal liaison between the agencies involved at the district level, including between the prison and the probation service. This need not preclude the existence of useful relationships between individual officers in the field.

If financial assistance is formally accepted as part of the prison's responsibility, one suggestion is to encourage prisoners to attend to such matters as obtaining IRD numbers and opening bank accounts, if necessary by granting parole for the purpose. A more institutional response, but a possibility, would be for the prison to have some formal arrangement with the Inland Revenue Department to obtain IRD numbers for the prisoners.

The unemployment benefit can be paid in the least possible time

There is no reason why all released prisoners should not receive their first unemployment benefit in the minimum possible time. Given benefits are paid one week in arrears, this is 8 - 10 days (depending on the day the prisoner is released). Even then the payment may be for only part of a week. This early payment can be achieved relatively easily by informing prisoners of what is available, assisting them to complete applications and attendant matters before release, and telling them how

to go about dealing with the Department of Social Welfare. It is not necessary to lodge the application prior to release if the local Social Welfare office recognises released prisoners as a group which needs immediate attention by persons with sufficient experience to make accurate decisions at the time of application.

How to fill the 8 - 10 day waiting period? The Special Needs Grant

This is the crucial question and one for which the pilot programme did not provide many answers. But it did reconfirm that prisoners have deplorably little money when released. If the main source of financial assistance remains the benefit system, the existing mechanism for filling the gap is an SNG. It is a discretionary payment, but there could be a policy where the presumption is that unless his or her circumstances dictate otherwise, a released prisoner should have at least the equivalent of the unemployment benefit available on the day of release. An SNG could be used to make the ex-prisoner's funds up to this standard. The SNG should be non-recoverable. This decision should be available to the prisoner on the day of release.

This still leaves the problem that when the released prisoner receives the first benefit, 8 - 10 days later, often it still will not be a full week's benefit. This too should be made up to the full rate by means of an SNG.

An alternative way of viewing this is for there to be a significant change to the date from which released prisoners are eligible for the benefit, i.e. from the Monday of the week before they are released. An SNG would still be necessary to cover the one to three days between release and first benefit payment.

These suggestions obviously rest on substantial policy decisions of the Department of Social Welfare. One point to be made in support of such changes is that such a policy would not be a matter of giving preferential treatment to released prisoners, but a recognition of their particular situation which has removed from them any capability of earning money for a substantial period of time. The average (mean) length of time spent in prison by the pilot group was 6 months.

The cost of financial assistance

The data of this survey can be used for initial estimates of the cost of a financial assistance programme. In the present context the cost of unemployment, sickness and accommodation benefits are excluded as these will accrue regardless of the applicant's previous status as "prisoner". Discretionary grants and loans are the more relevant in this context. The following data relate to all releases (213) from Paparua during the six months surveyed :

9% received probation loans at a total cost of \$676.

42% received an SNG at a total cost of \$3,823.

Taking the unemployment benefit rate as a standard for the purposes of illustration, 84% (179) did not have \$76.80 when released. If the funds of these 179 men were brought up to this amount it would have cost \$9,171.

Information about Special Needs Grants

At present, prisoners need to know about SNGs to ask for one. Information about their existence ought to be given freely and encouragingly to prisoners. Even with the knowledge, released prisoners do not often have the skills necessary to presenting their case to advantage. It is suggested that it should be Social Welfare policy to initiate consideration of an SNG for each released prisoner.

Distant destinations

This pilot programme did not experiment with means of communicating with Social Welfare offices in districts away from the prison. It was shown that there was no particular advantage as far as the unemployment benefit is concerned in having the application lodged prior to release if the receiving office gives immediate and experienced attention to released prisoners. If all districts had the same policy, a released prisoner could carry the completed application to his or her destination. There may still be a need for funds to see the person through a day or two of travel. The office near the prison could provide an SNG in these circumstances.

Isolated prisons

The problem is compounded when the prison is not near any Social Welfare office. The pilot programme did not offer any solutions for this. The suggestion raised prior to the pilot programme should be reconsidered. This was the possibility of prison superintendents having Social Welfare agent status for the purposes of granting SNGs.

Reducing mutual frustration between Department of Social Welfare staff and released prisoners

A number of activities in Christchurch contributed to easing these frustrations:

- (i) Information about and completion of benefit application prior to release helped to reduce prisoner anxieties and equipped them to deal with government departments.
- (ii) Reducing the number of times a released prisoner had to call into the Social Welfare office. Once recognised as a released prisoner, he was dealt with and given decisions regarding eligibility and payment at the first interview.
- (iii) This required experienced staff dealing with released prisoners. And in the case of Christchurch during the pilot period, one senior clerk was mainly responsible for handling the applications of released prisoners. He knew their names and date of release before they were released. This familiarity has presumably ceased with the changes since the pilot programme.

It is an empirical question whether these advantages remain since the changes to the pilot programme. Do released prisoners call into the Social Welfare office less often? How often do released prisoners not present "Steps to Freedom" or otherwise not identify themselves as a released prisoner, thus foregoing the consequent advantages? Do released prisoners always deal with an experienced clerk? How many released prisoners know to ask for an SNG by name?

Suggested revision of goals and objectives

Finally, the following revision of the goals and objectives for a financial assistance programme is presented with the aim of encouraging the extension of the programme to all New Zealand prisons. The goal is restricted to the question of providing adequate funds and does not extend to the issue of how this relates to reoffending. The objectives are formulated on the basis that financial assistance derives from the benefit system and that the unemployment benefit is paid in arrears. They are given as examples only, but they do illustrate the specificity that objectives should have. As there has been no definition of how much "adequate" is, alternative amounts are given in the first objective. The distinction between the two amounts is that the first is "adequate" if the person is having to set-up house, a realistic expectation for many prisoners, while the second amount is "adequate" for maintaining an ongoing situation.

Goal

To ensure prisoners have adequate money when released from prison to meet their immediate needs.

Objectives

1. All prisoners are to receive an SNG on the day they are released of an amount which brings their total funds up to \$300 or to the level of the unemployment benefit, depending on the circumstances.
2. All prisoners eligible for an unemployment benefit are to receive their first payment on the Thursday of the week after they are released.
3. If the first benefit payment is not equivalent to a week's benefit, an SNG is to be granted to make it up to one week's unemployment benefit.

Operational Objectives

Specific operational objectives are not presented here as they will depend on the local circumstances. There are however some general points to be

made. Fulfilling the time requirements built into the above objectives depends to some degree on the prisoner accepting the responsibility for making the applications. However, the Paparua pilot programme showed that much can be done to foster this and it is activities to this end that should be included in operational objectives. Important activities include informing prisoners of what is available and how to get it; completion of the unemployment benefit application prior to release; allowing and encouraging prisoners to get their IRD and bank account numbers prior to release. One area which is not the prisoner's responsibility but which the Paparua pilot showed to be important is the Department of Social Welfare providing an experienced and senior clerk to deal with prisoner's applications.

APPENDIX 1

Methodology

There were two distinct phases in this exercise. The first was a preliminary delineation of the pilot programme itself and the subsequent formulation of goals and objectives. The second was the empirical evaluation of the programme.

1. THE PILOT PROGRAMME MODEL

The purpose of the pilot programme was clear enough in head office documentation, but it had not been formulated explicitly in terms of goals and objectives prior to this evaluation. It became evident at the first local meeting of all parties involved (representing the Prison, Probation, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Labour, PARS, and the Salvation Army) that its goals and objectives were not communicated explicitly enough to the Christchurch participants who were asked to implement the pilot scheme. The dominant theme that emerged there was that the purpose of the pilot scheme was to reduce ex-prisoners' harassment of Social Welfare counter staff.

As a result of this uncertain beginning, the first phase of the evaluation was to interview all the people present at that first implementation meeting in order to ascertain their views about the purpose of the pilot programme and their expectations of its outcomes. These interviews confirmed the mixed nature of expectations. However they were predictable in that, for the most part, they reflected the concerns associated with the roles of the various participants. Prison

responses were the exception. Although they were concerned about prisoner welfare, they understood that the purpose of the scheme was to relieve pressure on the Department of Social Welfare.

The objectives and expectations as reported in interview were mixed but not mutually exclusive nor incompatible. There were two main emphases (prisoner welfare and Department of Social Welfare welfare) and within these the different objectives were really a matter of degree of specificity.

The goals and objectives as set out in chapter I were constructed for the purpose of directing this evaluation. They are based on information from a number of sources: Department of Justice, head office files; interviews with head office staff in the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Welfare; participation in and minutes of the first meeting of the Christchurch group involved in the programme; interviews with the various Christchurch participants.

2. THE EVALUATION

Two main research methods were used :

- (i) observation
- (ii) a file survey of the financial position of released inmates

The intention to interview released prisoners was not pursued because of lack of time. The interview would have asked for prisoners' comments on the usefulness of the pre-release meetings, on their dealings with assistance agencies, and on financial difficulties experienced on release.

Observation

Purpose

To record aspects of the pilot programme for which no documentation was available, in particular the conduct of the pre-release meetings with prisoners. This information was thought to be important in ascertaining how the actual operation enhances or hinders goal attainment.

Events observed

The researcher attended the two organisational meetings held at the prison. The purpose of the first on 7 September 1983 was to set up the pilot programme. The second meeting on 8 March 1984 reviewed the success of the scheme and recommended amendments for an ongoing programme. Both meetings were attended by representatives of all the local organisations involved in the scheme (see p.65). The researcher participated in the meetings as well as observed. Notes were taken during the course of the meetings.

The researcher attended the three Tuesday pre-release meetings (in September, October and November). These were held at the prison, in the afternoon for approximately one hour. As well as observing, the researcher explained her presence to the prisoners and talked to some on an individual basis. Notes were recorded after the meetings.

The researcher attended two of the three Wednesday pre-release meetings held at the prison (October and November). These were morning meetings and lasted approximately one and a half hours. The researcher participated by helping prisoners complete unemployment benefit applications. Notes were recorded after the meetings.

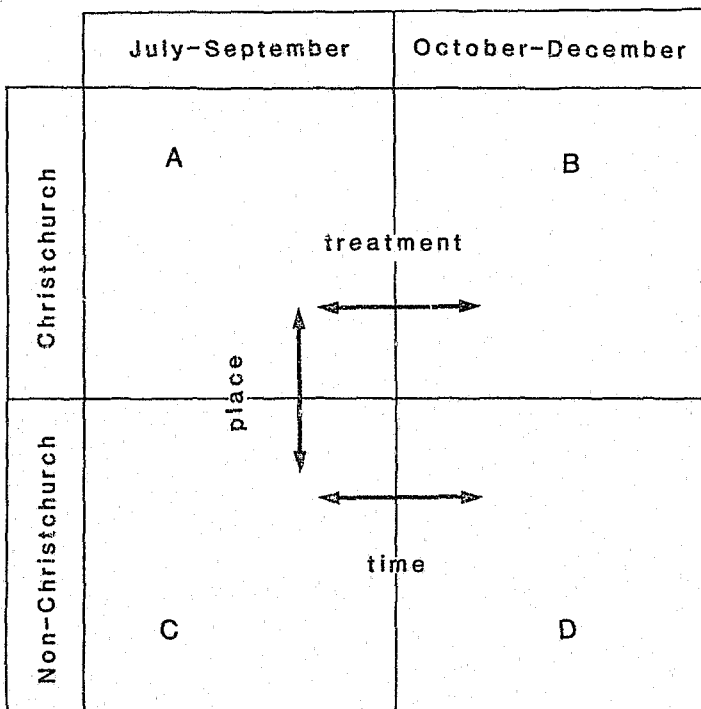
Financial Survey

Purpose

To establish empirically the financial position of released prisoners and whether the pilot programme was effective in ensuring that released prisoners' finances met the required standards.

Design

Data was collected for all prisoners who were released from Paparua Prison during the pilot period (October to December 1983) and all those released during the preceding three months (July to September 1983). A total of 213 men. Because the pilot programme was restricted to prisoners who intended to live in Christchurch, the men were divided on the basis of place and time into four groups for analysis :



The main analysis was concerned with testing whether the pilot programme had an effect on the financial position of ex-prisoners. Two preliminary planned comparisons were made to analyse the effect that place and time might have on ex-prisoners' financial position independently of the pilot programme. The three analyses were :

- (i) The first preliminary analysis was concerned with the possible effect place of residence might have. It compared groups A and C to detect differences between prisoners staying in Christchurch and prisoners moving away from Christchurch, where neither group experienced the pilot programme, i.e. they both were released during July–September. It was found that prisoners moving away from Christchurch applied for an unemployment benefit significantly less and that if they received an SNG it was for a significantly greater amount. Results of this analysis are reported in appendix 2.
- (ii) The second preliminary analysis was concerned with the possible effect that time might have. It compared groups C and D to detect differences between prisoners who were released July–September and those released October–December, where neither group experienced the pilot programme, i.e. they both lived outside Christchurch. No significant differences were found between the two groups. Results of this analysis are reported in appendix 3.
- (iii) Given the financial position of prisoners was found to vary according to place, but not time, the main comparison to test the effect of the pilot programme on the prisoners' financial position (the treatment effect) was between groups A and B, i.e. it controlled for place, but not for time. In other words, the comparison is between those who experienced the pilot programme and another group who similarly lived in Christchurch after release but who did not experience the pilot programme. This analysis is the subject of chapter 4 in the main text.

In summary the four groups were :

- A. Released July-September and living in Christchurch N = 64. This group is labelled "non-pilot" in the analysis of the treatment effect, and "Christchurch" in the analysis of the place effect.
- B. Released October-December and living in Christchurch N = 64. This group is labelled "pilot" in the analysis of the treatment effect.
- C. Released July-September and not living in Christchurch N = 47. This group is labelled "Non-Christchurch" in the analysis of the place effect, and "July-September" in the analysis of the time effect.
- D. Released October-December and not living in Christchurch. N = 38. This group is labelled "October-December" in the analysis of the time effect.

Data definitions

One item of information that proved difficult to define was the prisoner's intended destination once released from prison. It is a critical piece of information. The difficulty arises from the nature of the phenomenon. Not all the prisoners know where they are going to live and if they do their circumstances are often changeable. It was not unusual for intended destination to change during the weeks between pre-release meeting and release. If a person applied for a benefit with the Christchurch Department of Social Welfare, he was said to live in Christchurch. If he was reporting to the Christchurch Probation Office, he was said to live in Christchurch. If neither of these applied, his destination was taken as that supplied by the prison on its release lists.

Analysis

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the medians of variables associated with amounts of money and time elapsed. The median was considered the appropriate measure, as comparisons of means demonstrated that the two populations usually had very different variances. The chi-square test was used to compare the difference between proportions. Pearson (r) was used to examine correlation. The accepted level of significance was set at $p = 0.05$.

Data Sources

Department of Justice :

Christchurch Prison : Weekly and monthly lists of releases ; lists of earnings paid to released inmates ; inmate files.

Probation Offices : Details on probation imprest account loans ; date balance of earnings collected.

Courts : Data on the incidence and date of reoffence.

Department of Social Welfare : Applicants' files for details on dates and amounts of benefits and SNGs.

Christchurch and Westland PARS : Details on assistance PARS has given.

Prison superintendents, district probation officers and PARS societies throughout New Zealand also provided information on schemes operating and difficulties encountered in their area.

APPENDIX 2

Comparison Between Prisoners Released July to September

Living in Christchurch and Prisoners Released July to September

Not Living in Christchurch

AIM: To detect whether place of residence after release (i.e. Christchurch or not Christchurch) resulted in significant differences in ex-prisoners' financial position. Both groups were released during July-September and consequently did not experience the pilot programme.

A. MONEY AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF RELEASE

Table 29: Total Money Owning from Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	3	610	46	27	63 *
Non-Christchurch	3	916	64	28	46 *

(MWU, $Z = 0.21$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

Table 30: Money in Hand as Leave Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	3	127	23	17	64
Non-Christchurch	3	368	40	20	46 *

(MWU, $Z = 1.28$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

B. PROBATION IMPREST ACCOUNT LOANS

53% of the Christchurch and 28% of the non-Christchurch prisoners were released on probation. Six of the Christchurch and 1 of the non-Christchurch prisoners received a probation imprest account loan. The median loan for the Christchurch group was \$30 and the median time for payment was 2 days after release. The non-Christchurch loan was for \$40 and was paid on the day of release.

C. THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

Table 31: Unemployment Benefit Applications

Unemployment Benefit	Christchurch		Non-Christchurch	
	n	%	n	%
Apply	50 *	78	25	53
Not Apply	14	22	22	47
TOTAL	64	100	47	100

($\chi^2 = 6.60$, d.f. = 1, $p < 0.025$)

* 1 of whom was declined a benefit.

Table 32: Time Between Release and Unemployment Benefit Application

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	Same day	21	2	1	50
Non-Christchurch	Same day	8	2	1	25

(MWU, $Z = 1.44$, n.s.)

Table 33: Amount of First Unemployment Benefit Payment (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	5	139	66	60	49
Non-Christchurch	26	138	63	46	25

(MWU, $Z = 0.45$, n.s.)Table 34: Time from Release to First Unemployment Benefit Payment (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	8	29	12	9.5	49
Non-Christchurch	1	27	12	9	25

(MWU, $Z = 0.55$, n.s.)D. SICKNESS BENEFIT AND ACCOMMODATION BENEFIT

One of the Christchurch and 2 of the non-Christchurch prisoners received a sickness benefit. Six of the Christchurch and 3 of the non-Christchurch prisoners received an accommodation benefit.

E. SPECIAL NEEDS GRANTSTable 35: Number of Prisoners Receiving an SNG

SNG	Christchurch		Non-Christchurch	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	32*	50	15**	32
No	32	50	32	68
TOTAL	64	100	47	100

(chi² = 2.93, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

*5 of whom had 2 SNGs each.

** 1 of whom had 2 SNGs and 2 of whom had 3 SNGs each.

Table 36: SNGs Recoverable or Non-Recoverable

SNG	Christchurch		Non-Christchurch	
	No.	%	No.	%
Recoverable	20	54	11	55
Non-Recoverable	17	46	9	45
TOTAL	37	100	20	100

(chi² = 0.31, d.f. = 1, n.s.)Table 37: Amount of First SNG (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	15	201	33	22	32
Non-Christchurch	20	50	31	29	14 *

(MWU, Z = 2.07, p < 0.05)

* 1 missing

Table 38: Time from Release to First SNG (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	same day	11	2	1	31 *
Non-Christchurch	same day	9	3	1	14 *

(MWU, $Z = 0.43$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

F. TOTAL MONEY IN HAND FROM ALL SOURCES ON DAY OF RELEASE

Table 39: Total Money in Hand from All Sources on Day of Release (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
Christchurch	3	609	49	28	63 *
Non-Christchurch	3	916	64	24	46 *

(MWU, $Z = 0.50$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

APPENDIX 3

Comparison Between Prisoners Released July to September and Not Living in Christchurch and Prisoners Released October to December and Not Living in Christchurch

AIM: To detect whether the time of release (i.e. July–September versus October–December) resulted in significant differences in ex-prisoners' financial position. Both groups lived outside Christchurch and consequently did not experience the pilot programme.

A. MONEY AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF RELEASE

Table 40: Total Money Owning from Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July–September	3	916	64	28	46 *
October–December	3	516	76	34	38

(MWU, $Z = 1.12$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

Table 41: Money in Hand as Leave Prison (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July–September	3	368	40	20	46 *
October–December	3	516	67	18	38

(MWU, $Z = 0.42$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

B. PROBATION IMPREST ACCOUNT LOANS

28% of the July-September prisoners and 38% of the October-December prisoners were released on probation. Only 1 of each group received a probation imprest account loan. The July-September loan was \$40 which was collected on the day of release. The October-December loan was for \$15, 3 days after release.

C. THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

Table 42: Unemployment Benefit Applications

Unemployment Benefit	July-September		October-December	
	n	%	n	%
Apply	25	53	24*	63
Not Apply	22	47	14	37
TOTAL	47	100	38	100

($\chi^2 = 0.49$, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

* 1 was declined because the applicant's whereabouts was unknown.

Table 43: Time Between Release and Unemployment Benefit Application

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	same day	8	2	1	25
October-December	-26	8	same day	1	24

(MWU, $Z = 1.16$, n.s.)

Table 44: Amount of First Unemployment Benefit Payment (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	26	138	63	46	25
October-December	15	156	69	56	23

(MWU, $Z = 0.89$, n.s.)Table 45: Time from Release to First Unemployment Benefit Payment (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	1	27	12	9	25
October-December	6	43	13	10	23

(MWU, $Z = 0.22$, n.s.)D. SICKNESS BENEFIT AND ACCOMMODATION BENEFIT

Two of the July-September prisoners received a sickness benefit and 3 received an accommodation benefit. None of the October-December prisoners received a sickness or accommodation benefit.

E. SPECIAL NEEDS GRANTSTable 46: Number of Prisoners Receiving an SNG

SNG	July-September		October-December	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	15 *	32	15 **	39
No	32	68	23	61
TOTAL	47	100	38	100

(chi² = 0.25, d.f. = 1, n.s.)

* 1 of whom had 2 SNGs and 2 of whom had 3 SNGs each.

** 4 of whom had 2 SNGs each.

Table 47: SNGs Recoverable or Non-Recoverable

SNG	July-September		October-December	
	No.	%	No.	%
Recoverable	11	55	4	21
Non-Recoverable	9	45	15	79
TOTAL	20	100	19	100

(chi² = 3.42, d.f. = 1, n.s.)Table 48: Amount of First SNG (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	20	50	31	29	14 *
October-December	30	77	36	32	15

(MWU, Z = 1.57, n.s.)

* 1 missing

Table 49: Time from Release to First SNG (days)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	same day	9	3	1	14 *
October-December	same day	10	3	1	15

(MWU, $Z = 0.20$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

F. TOTAL MONEY IN HAND FROM ALL SOURCES ON DAY OF RELEASE

Table 50: Total Money in Hand from All Sources on Day of Release (\$)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	No.
July-September	3	916	64	24	46*
October-December	3	516	70	23	38

(MWU, $Z = 0.30$, n.s.)

* 1 missing

APPENDIX 4

The 'Steps to Freedom' Form

New Zealand Prisoners' Aid & Rehabilitation Society (Inc.)

Telephone
725-797

C.P.O. Box 2683
Wellington

STEPS TO FREEDOM

This form is handed to you on discharge in the hope that the following information may be of help.

PRISONERS' AID AND REHABILITATION SOCIETY (PARS)

The address of the local Society in the town to which you are going can be obtained from the telephone directory or if it is not in the directory, from the Probation Office.

In general, PARS is usually able to assist you with clothing, accommodation, etc, but of course this depends upon circumstances.

GETTING A JOB

If you do not have a job on discharge:

- (1) Call at the Department of Labour and register for employment. If you are offered work, you must accept it or aid will not be available.
- (2) If you are not offered a job, ask for a certificate which you then take to the Department of Social Welfare and apply for an Unemployment Benefit.

When applying for a benefit, produce this form. The addresses of both the above departments will be in the telephone book.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Director
Department of Social Welfare

Name
of
Institution
(Date Stamp)

Dear Sir

This applicant has just been released from a penal institution. If a benefit is granted, you may consider waiving the stand-down period and also make immediate assistance available to him/her. The following information may help in assessment.

Name of Applicant

Date Imprisoned Date Released

Institution earnings and deposit cash on release \$

.....
Specimen Signature

.....
for Superintendent

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