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ADULT CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN CANADA, 1995-96

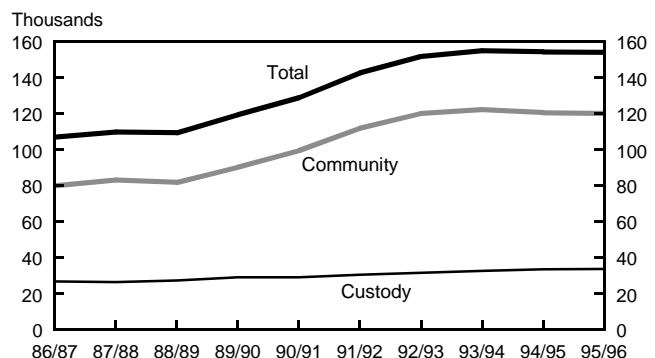
by Micheline Reed and Peter Morrison

Highlights

- After nearly a decade of rapid growth, Canada's adult correctional population has stabilized since 1993-94.
- On any given day in 1995-96, an average of 154,000 persons were under the supervision of correctional agencies, down less than 1% from 1994-95. About 14,100 (9%) were inmates in federal penitentiaries, 19,700 (13%) were in provincial/territorial facilities, and 120,300 (78%) were offenders on probation or some form of conditional release in the community (e.g. parole). Although the total correctional population dropped slightly for the second consecutive year, it was still 44% higher than a decade ago.
- The total number of adults in jail in 1995-96 remained almost unchanged from the previous year (+0.1%), but was 26% higher than a decade ago. By comparison, the community supervision caseload in 1995-96 was 50% higher than ten years ago.
- The typical offender serving a provincial sentence (under two years) was male, aged 31 years, convicted of a property offence, and serving a one month sentence. The typical federal offender (sentences of two years or more) was male, aged 33 years, convicted of robbery, and serving a 46 month sentence.
- One in four sentenced admissions to provincial custody were for failing to pay a fine.
- Aboriginal peoples accounted for 16% of total sentenced admissions, down from 18% in 1993-94 and 24% in 1991-92.
- Of the 94 inmate deaths in 1995-96, nearly one-half were suicides. The inmate suicide rate was more than twice that of the Canadian adult population.
- Adult correctional services cost \$1.9 billion in 1995-96. Spending at the national level increased 1% in 1995-96 from the previous year and 34% from 1986-87. Taking inflation into account, total spending increased 12% over the same ten year period. The average cost of keeping an offender behind bars was \$42,300 in 1995-96, up 5% from the previous year.

Figure 1

Average daily count of offenders in custody and in the community, 1986-87 to 1995-96



Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.



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Introduction

When an offender is sentenced to confinement in a correctional facility, or to some community-based program, they come under the supervision of a correctional agency. These agencies will assume responsibility for implementing the sanctions imposed by the courts, assess the offender's needs (e.g. drug and alcohol treatment), and strive to minimize the offender's risk of re-offending.

During the past decade, Canadians have witnessed considerable increases in the correctional population. The most dramatic increases occurred between 1988-89 and 1992-93, when the total correctional population increased from 109,000 to 152,000 (+39%). While the total prison population in Canada has been relatively stable in recent years, the number of offenders serving a sentence in the community (e.g. parole or probation) has increased much faster than the institutional population. On any given day, one out of every 146 adult Canadians were either incarcerated or being supervised in the community in 1995-96.

In the fall of 1996, Bill C-41 was proclaimed into law and is intended to reform the sentencing system in Canada. The reforms are designed to protect the public, assist victims, instill a greater sense of responsibility in offenders, and support the principles of rehabilitation, restitution and deterrence. A further objective of this Bill is to promote the use of alternatives to imprisonment where appropriate. For instance, one-quarter of admissions to provincial correctional institutions are for failure to pay fines. Alternatives to imprisonment could result in less-crowded and safer prisons, and lower operating costs. In 1995-96, each inmate cost taxpayers an average of \$42,300 to keep in an institution, while the average annual cost of supervising an offender in the community on parole or statutory release last year was \$9,145. Under this Bill, the courts are required to consider all available options to imprisonment where appropriate (e.g. community service or probation) and consider imprisonment if no other course of action will ensure the protection of society.

Similar to programs for young offenders, the Bill allows the use of alternative measures for adults where the aim is to deal with minor offences without using valuable court and correctional resources. Alternative measures place an emphasis on victim-offender settlement as opposed to entry into formal court proceedings.

The reality of a changing corrections population raises a host of important questions: Is the corrections population growing? What type of offender is given a prison sentence? How many people are imprisoned for failing to pay a fine? What is the cost of imprisonment? How many offenders are serving part of their sentence in the community under supervision? This Juristat examines data from the Adult Corrections Survey (ACS) and provides readers with a comprehensive overview of the adult prison population, operating costs, charge and offence information, sentencing data, and community supervision services. The findings reported here are provided in greater detail in the annual report Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 1995-96 (Catalogue 85-211-XPB).

Background

Adult correctional services involves more than the custodial care of offenders sentenced to prison. Correctional authorities are responsible for the care of accused persons awaiting trial (remand¹), offenders sentenced to a period of probation, and offenders who are sentenced to prison but serve part of their custodial sentence in the community through a conditional release program. Almost all inmates serve part of their sentences in the community. Correctional authorities have responsibility for supervising these offenders until their sentences expire.

¹ Refers to a person ordered by the court to be held in custody while awaiting a further court appearance. These persons have not been sentenced and can be held for a number of reasons (e.g. risk that they won't appear for their court date, danger to themselves and/or others, risk to re-offend).

Different levels of government share responsibility for correctional services

The federal government (Correctional Service Canada) is responsible for all offenders sentenced to a term of imprisonment of two years or more, and has jurisdiction over those offenders released into the community under some form of conditional release (i.e. day parole, full parole and, statutory release²).

The provincial/territorial systems handle inmates serving a sentence of less than two years and are responsible for all accused persons awaiting trial or failing to pay a fine, and

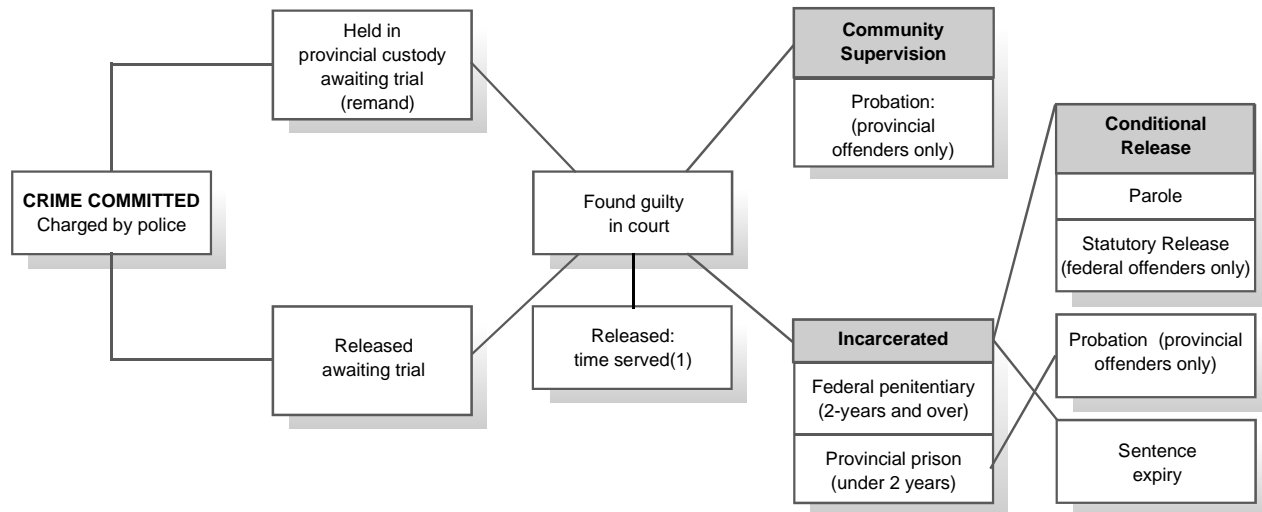
² A federal offender is eligible for parole after serving one-third of their sentence. Many federal offenders who are not granted parole must be released into the community after serving two-thirds of their sentence. This process is referred to as statutory release.

offenders placed on probation. Offenders who are to serve a federal sentence are first admitted to a provincial/territorial facility to allow them to exercise their right to appeal their conviction and/or sentence. Offenders are allowed 15 days to file notice of appeal before they are transferred to federal custody.

Many provincial/territorial offenders serve all of their sentence in the community on supervised probation. Others are sentenced to prison, but serve part of their custodial sentence in the community, through conditional release programs. Three provinces operate their own parole boards - Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. The remaining provinces and the two territories fall within the jurisdiction of the National Parole Board, which is also responsible for parole applications from inmates in federal institutions. Figure 2 provides the reader with an overview of the major events in the correctional system.

Figure 2

Overview of Events in the Adult Correctional System



(1) An individual whose sentence approximates time already served in custody (i.e. while awaiting trial) is generally released by virtue of having already served their sentence.

Source: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Measures of Correctional Activity: Admissions and Average Counts

Two different indicators are used in this report to describe the use of correctional services: the number of annual **admissions** to correctional facilities or to community supervision programs (also referred to as “intakes” when discussing entry into community programs) and the average **count** of inmates imprisoned or serving a sentence in the community at a given point in time.

While admission data describe and measure the changing caseload of correctional agencies over time, these data do not indicate the number of individuals using correctional services. A person can be included several times in annual admission totals. For instance, a person held in custody before their trial (remand) could then be sentenced to nine months in prison and later be released on parole to complete their sentence in the community.

In this situation, the offender is counted three times in the admission totals. While it is important to monitor the workload associated with each individual (remand, sentenced to prison, parole), it is also equally important to be able to count the total number of offenders producing the admissions workload.

In order to determine how many offenders are imprisoned or serving a sentence in the community, corrections officials perform daily counts of inmates in their facility and monthly counts of offenders in community supervision. A person sentenced to 25 years in prison for committing a murder in 1990 would appear in the custodial count data for 1995-96, since they would still be in prison on the day or month the count took place. They would not, however, appear as part of the admission data for 1995-96, since they were actually admitted to prison several years earlier. Recent trends relating to both measures are presented in this Juristat.

A National Profile

The adult correctional population is comprised of four distinct groups: (1) people sentenced to a term of imprisonment or (2) are in custody on remand/temporary detention; (3) offenders placed on a term of probation; and, (4) offenders serving part of their prison sentence under supervision in the community (parole/statutory release).

Probation is the primary community-based court sanction in the provincial/territorial corrections system. The terms of probation vary from case to case, but usually include a requirement that the offender keep the peace, refrain from alcohol or drug use, appear before the court when required to do so, be under the supervision of a probation officer or other persons, and fulfil any other conditions imposed by the judge, such as, making restitution or reparation to any person having a grievance or injured during the commission of the offence. Probation orders may be combined with suspended sentences, fines, or jail sentences. The court can impose a term of probation in conjunction with a suspended sentence or along with another disposition such as imprisonment. A judge may suspend the passing of sentence and place the offender on probation for a period of up to three years. Conditional releases include parole and statutory release which are described in detail later in this report.

The Offender Population

Number of offenders declines for second consecutive year

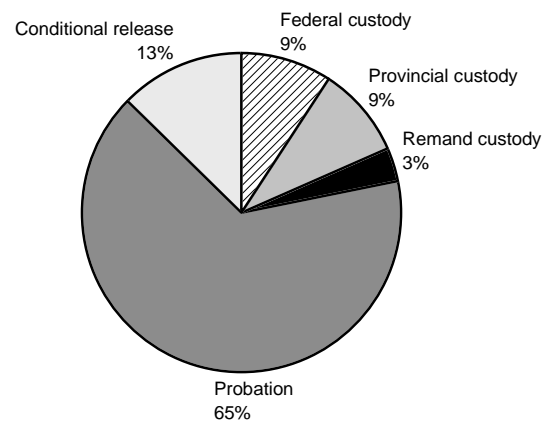
On any given day during 1995-96, an average of 154,000 persons were counted under the direct care or supervision of adult correctional agencies - about 28,500³ (19%) were serving a sentence in a correctional facility, another 5,300 (3%) were

being held in remand (e.g. offender is a risk to re-offend or not appear in court and is therefore held while awaiting trial) and 120,300 (78%) were completing their sentence in the community, either on probation or some form of conditional release such as parole (Figure 3). While the total correctional population in Canada has been relatively stable in recent years (down 0.2% in 1995-96), the average number of adults in custody and under community supervision was still 44% higher than a decade ago (Table 1).

³ Includes an average of 215 offenders on temporary/other detention.

Figure 3

Adult correctional populations, 1995-96



Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Table 1

Average Daily Count of Offenders and Annual Admissions to Provincial and Federal Corrections, 1986-87 to 1995-96

Year	Average daily counts				% change from previous year	Admissions/intakes			% change from previous year
	Custody	Community	Total			Custody	Community ¹	Total	
1986-87	26,893	80,080	106,973	...	187,648	63,610	251,258	...	
1987-88	26,634	83,318	109,952	2.8	194,129	64,489	258,618	2.9	
1988-89	27,466	81,859	109,325	-0.6	202,264	63,909	266,173	2.9	
1989-90	29,150	90,314	119,464	9.3	204,503	68,739	273,242	2.7	
1990-91	29,233	99,658	128,891	7.9	212,242	75,786	288,028	5.4	
1991-92	30,723	112,033	142,756	10.8	248,624	54,756	303,380	...	
1992-93	31,709	120,116	151,825	6.4	251,329	53,185	304,514	...	
1993-94	32,803	122,234	155,037	2.1	245,818	94,608	340,426	...	
1994-95	33,759	120,542	154,301	-0.5	243,618	92,822	336,440	-1.2	
1995-96	33,785	120,261	154,046	-0.2	234,732	89,976	324,708	-3.5	

¹ The number of admissions/intakes into provincial probation were not available for Ontario in 1991-92 and 1992-93.

... figures not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Admissions to custody continue to decline

As noted earlier, admissions data indicate the flow of individuals through the different parts of the correctional system in a given year, whereas counts represent a “snapshot” of the corrections population at a specific point in time. In 1995-96, the total number of admissions to both federal and provincial/territorial correctional programs (324,700) decreased 4% from the previous year and was the largest annual decline in ten years. The number of admissions to prison in 1995-96 was down 4% from the year before, and represented the third straight annual decline. Despite the 4% drop, the number of admissions was still 25% higher than a decade ago (Table 1).

The relatively short stay in provincial/territorial jails (31 days) accounts for the large number of admissions. Many offenders may re-enter an institution more than once in a given year because of the shorter sentences served in the provincial system. Of the 324,700 admissions in 1995-96, 72% were to serve a sentence in a correctional facility or held in custody (remand) awaiting a further court appearance. The remaining 28% entered a community supervision program, mostly probation or parole.

Number of offenders in prison levels off

On an average day in 1995-96, about 33,800 adults were in prison in Canada. While this represents the highest number ever, the total number of adults in jail was about the same as last year. Over the past decade, the inmate population has consistently increased and is 26% higher than in 1986-87. An average of 14,055 offenders were in federal penitentiaries at

any one time during 1995-96, the sixth consecutive annual increase. This represents an increase of less than 1% over the previous year. The number of offenders in provincial facilities reached 19,730⁴, down less than 1% in 1995-96 (Table 2) and up 4% since 1991-92. Over the last five years, the percentage increase in the custodial population has been larger in federal institutions than in provincial institutions (19% as opposed to 4%). However, the long-term trend shows that over the last 10 years, the number of provincial and federal offenders increased at about the same rate (provincial 24% and federal 27%).

Of those in prison, a total of 5,300 inmates were being held (remanded to custody) in provincial/territorial facilities awaiting the completion of their trials or sentencing. Overall, the average number of offenders on remand status was down 1% in 1995-96, the first drop in several years. However, the average number of persons on remand has increased 6% since 1991-92.

Most new admissions are to serve time in prison

Overall, nearly one-half of new admissions to federal and provincial/territorial corrections were sentenced to custody, the majority of these (96%) were to provincial institutions. A total of 230,330 offenders (includes 115,768 on remand and other detention) were admitted to provincial/territorial correctional facilities in 1995-96, a 4% drop from 1994-95, but a 6% increase from five years ago. Sentenced admissions to federal penitentiaries (4,402) were down 8% while provincial sentenced admissions fell 3% (Table 3).

⁴ Includes an average of 215 offenders on temporary/other detention.

Table 2



Counts of Offenders in Provincial and Federal Custody, 1995-96

Jurisdiction	Sentenced count	% change from previous year	Remand count	% change from previous year	Other ¹	Total offender count	% change from previous year	Number sentenced to custody per 10,000 adults charged ²	% change from previous year
Newfoundland	319	-9.9	36	-7.7	-	355	-9.7	371	-1.1
Prince Edward Island	96	14.3	11	0.0	-	107	12.6	461	17.0
Nova Scotia	346	-7.2	61	-7.6	-	407	-7.3	223	7.7
New Brunswick	353	-6.1	48	11.6	10	411	-4.2	298	1.4
Quebec	2,303	-1.3	1,167	-4.3	-	3,470	-2.3	197	1.5
Ontario	4,690	1.5	2,465	-1.7	201	7,356	1.0	250	5.0
Manitoba	696	-1.0	272	14.8	4	972	3.3	259	3.6
Saskatchewan	1,088	1.1	179	9.2	-	1,267	2.2	362	-1.4
Alberta	2,084	-5.9	466	-6.2	-	2,550	6.0	362	5.5
British Columbia	1,933	3.2	501	2.9	-	2,434	3.1	258	2.0
Yukon	63	16.7	21	40.0	-	84	21.7	451	23.2
Northwest Territories	278	9.0	39	-7.1	-	317	6.7	864	20.3
Provincial Total	14,249	-0.5	5,266	-1.2	221	19,730	-0.4	266	3.9
Federal Total	14,055	0.8	...	...	...	14,055	0.8	262	4.8

¹ Includes offenders on temporary/other detention.

² The rate per 10,000 adults charged calculation is based on Criminal Code and Federal Statutes offences only.

- nil or zero.

... figures not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Table 3



Admissions to Provincial and Federal Custody, by Selected Characteristics, 1995-96

Jurisdiction	Sentenced admissions	% change from previous year	Remand admissions	% change from previous year	Other admissions ¹	Total admissions	% change from previous year	Sentenced admissions per 10,000 adults charged ²	Sentenced inmate characteristics		
									Per cent female	Per cent Aboriginal	Median age
Newfoundland	2,386	-13.8	254	0.0	9	2,649	-12.4	2,777	7	7	32
Prince Edward Island	993	23.8	93	2.2	-	1,086	21.6	4,765	5	3	29
Nova Scotia	2,622	-4.6	1,139	8.1	369	4,130	-2.7	1,692	5	4	30
New Brunswick	3,383	-7.8	988	4.2	-	4,371	-5.3	2,854	5	6	29
Quebec	28,075	8.6	34,167	-5.9	-	62,242	0.1	2,406	8	1	32
Ontario	37,110	-4.4	43,196	-7.1	5,148	85,454	-6.1	1,976	9	8	30
Manitoba	2,433	-19.9	3,600	-26.8	3,763	9,796	-0.1	904	8	55	29
Saskatchewan	6,397	-4.9	5,623	4.4	-	12,020	-2.1	2,129	10	72	28
Alberta	18,345	-7.2	8,618	-3.3	-	26,963	-6.0	3,191	13	36	30
British Columbia	12,425	-0.1	8,533	11.5	-	20,958	4.3	1,659	7	17	30
Yukon	393	6.8	256	10.3	12	661	8.5	2,815	8	67	32
Northwest Territories	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Provincial Total³	114,562	-2.9	106,467	-5.5	9,301	230,330	-3.0	2,135	9	16	31
Federal Total	4,402	-7.5	...	...	...	...	...	82	3	12	33

¹ Includes offenders on temporary/other detention.

² The rate per 10,000 adults charged calculation is based on Criminal Code and Federal Statutes offences only.

- nil or zero.

... figures not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Most serve their time in the community

As noted earlier, the majority of offenders in the correctional population are not in prison. Of the 120,300 offenders in the community, 84% were on probation, while the remaining 16% were on some type of parole or statutory release. Despite levelling off in the last two years, numbers have been steadily increasing each year since 1988-89. In fact, the community supervised population has increased 50% from ten years ago (Table 1).

Over the past ten years, the number of offenders on probation or parole has increased much faster than the prison population. The community supervision count has risen 50%, compared with only a 26% rise in the number in prison.

New admissions to community programs decline slightly, a break with long-term trend

Similarly, admissions to community supervision programs dropped 3% in 1995-96 but have risen a total of 41% over the previous ten years. Of the 89,976 new admissions, probation accounted for the largest proportion (85%) while the remaining 15% were either admitted to parole or statutory release. Provincial admissions to community supervision programs followed the same downward trend (Table 5). In contrast, federal admissions to community programs rose about 1% in 1995-96, following two consecutive years of declines.

Geographical Patterns

New admissions to jail decline in most provinces

Overall admissions to jail decreased in eight jurisdictions, with Newfoundland (-12%) showing the largest provincial decrease, followed by Alberta and Ontario (both -6%). Total federal admissions dropped 12%. Increases in custodial admissions were highest in Prince Edward Island (22%) and the Yukon (9%).

It is important to note that, due to the relatively small numbers reported within some of the smaller jurisdictions, correctional populations for these areas can change dramatically from year to year.

Average daily inmate population counts remain stable within most jurisdictions

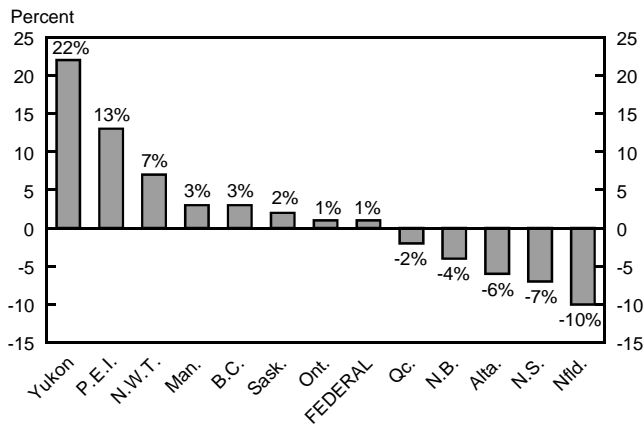
When compared to 1994-95, most jurisdictions had fairly stable inmate populations in 1995-96. Seven jurisdictions had less than a 4% change in their respective inmate populations. Even so, the average number of individuals behind bars rose sharply in Yukon (+22%) and Prince Edward Island (+13%). Newfoundland (-10%) and Nova Scotia (-7%) recorded the largest drops in their respective prison populations (Figure 4).

Admissions to community programs decline in most jurisdictions

New admissions to community supervised programs such as probation, parole or statutory release varied across the country. In 1995-96, only three provinces, New Brunswick (6%), British

Figure 4

Percent change in the average custodial counts from 1994-95 to 1995-96



Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Columbia (4%) and Saskatchewan (1%) recorded increases. As well, federal parole admissions rose slightly (1%). Prince Edward Island (-16%), Newfoundland (-12%) and Manitoba (-11%) led the provinces/territories reporting decreases in community supervision admissions.

Compared with the average custodial counts, the change in community supervision counts was less extreme, and while most jurisdictions experienced a modest rate of change, there were some notable exceptions. Newfoundland's community supervision population decreased (-15%), whereas British Columbia experienced an increase of approximately 9%.

The average number of persons on probation continues to increase

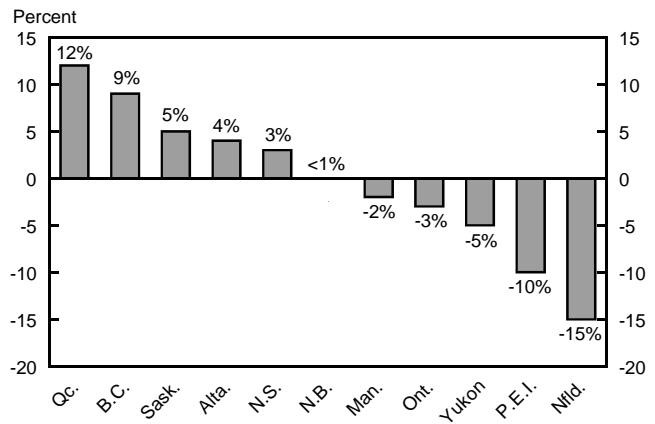
The average number of persons on probation represents a major indicator of workload for provincial/territorial correctional authorities. In 1995-96, the average count of probationers was 100,800 (Table 4), a 1% increase from the previous year and 8% since 1991-92. In 1995-96, almost half of the probationers were in Ontario. Newfoundland (-15%), Prince Edward Island (-10%), Yukon (-5%), Ontario (-3%) and Manitoba (-2%) experienced decreases in their average counts during the last year (Figure 5). Increases ranged in the seven other jurisdictions from less than 1% in New Brunswick to 12% in Quebec. With the exception of Prince Edward Island (-4%), Quebec (-18%) and the Yukon (-39%) all other jurisdictions have experienced increases in their average probation counts since 1991-92. On the whole, the Atlantic provinces experienced larger increases than the Western provinces.

Admission rates vary across the country

In order to provide readers with a comparative incarceration and community supervision measurement, rates of persons

Figure 5

Percentage change in the average probation counts from 1994-95 to 1995-96¹



¹ Excludes the Northwest Territories.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

admitted to provincial/territorial correctional service programs are calculated based on the number of persons charged with a criminal offence in each jurisdiction.

In 1995, 536,477 adults were charged with committing a Criminal Code and/or federal statute offence⁵. Across Canada, the 1995-96 sentenced incarceration rate was 266 per 10,000 adults charged, an increase from the previous year's rate of 256 per 10,000 adults charged. The Yukon experienced the largest increase (23%) in the incarceration rate between 1994-95 and 1995-96, followed by the Northwest Territories (20%) and Prince Edward Island (17%). Only Newfoundland and Saskatchewan reported a decrease (-1% each) in their incarceration rates.

Data from 1995-96 show considerable variation between jurisdictions in the use of probation (Table 5). Nova Scotia had the highest rate of 2,394 probationers per 10,000 adults charged. The lowest rate was observed in Quebec (554).

In 1995-96, 76,716 offenders began serving a term of probation, a 5% increase since 1991-92. Nationally, the probation intake rate went up 38% between 1991-92 and 1995-96. While this rate shows an increase in the number of offenders starting a term of probation, the comparable rate of offender counts has seen a larger increase. This increase in rates was evident in all jurisdictions with the exception of Prince Edward Island and the Yukon, where the rates declined by 31% and 7% respectively. Over the same period, the use of incarceration increased by 16%. Thus, there has been an increase in the use of probation as a sanction, relative to other dispositions such as incarceration.

⁵ Canadian Crime Statistics, 1995 (Catalogue 85-205-XPB) Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Traffic data include impaired driving related incidents only.

Table 4



Average Count of Offenders Under Community Supervision, 1995-96

Province	Probation	Conditional release		Total ¹	% change from previous year
		Federal and provincial parole	Federal statutory release		
Newfoundland	2,229	...	...	2,229	-14.9
Prince Edward Island	700	...	...	700	-9.8
Nova Scotia	4,339	...	...	4,339	2.7
New Brunswick	2,609	...	...	2,609	0.3
Quebec	9,520	1,918	...	11,438	9.1
Ontario	49,783	1,011	...	50,794	-3.2
Manitoba	5,361	...	...	5,361	-2.2
Saskatchewan	3,500	...	...	3,500	5.1
Alberta	7,657	...	...	7,657	3.7
British Columbia	14,648	283	...	14,931	8.7
Yukon	433	...	...	433	-5.3
Northwest Territories	..	..	..	..	..
Provincial Total	100,779	3,212	...	103,991	0.4
Federal Total²	...	6,550	2,742	9,292	-1.4

¹ The total caseload excludes 6,978 offenders on other forms of releases such as temporary absence.

² Includes provincial parolees in provinces not operating their own parole boards.

... figures not available.

... figures not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Table 5



Number of Admissions/Intakes to Community Supervision, Provincial and Federal, 1995-96

Jurisdiction	Total probation intakes	% change from previous year	Probation rate per 10,000 adults charged ¹	Selected probation characteristics			Conditional release		Total community supervision ²	% change from previous year
				Per cent female	Per cent Aboriginal	Median age	Federal and provincial parole	Federal statutory release		
Newfoundland	2,032	-11.7	2,365	13	9	28	...	...	2,032	-11.7
Prince Edward Island	428	-16.4	2,054	..	..	29	...	...	428	-16.4
Nova Scotia	3,709	-4.2	2,394	16	4	30	...	...	3,709	-4.2
New Brunswick	1,771	6.4	1,494	17	..	27	...	...	1,771	6.4
Quebec	6,461	0.2	554	11	5	29	3,246	...	9,707	-1.3
Ontario	32,002	-4.3	1,704	17	7	30	1,682	...	33,684	-6.4
Manitoba	3,209	-11.1	1,192	14	47	29	...	...	3,209	-11.1
Saskatchewan	3,345	0.5	1,113	19	56	28	...	...	3,345	0.5
Alberta	8,170	-2.5	1,421	22	22	..	...	...	8,170	-2.5
British Columbia	15,259	3.6	2,037	16	16	30	608	...	15,867	3.9
Yukon	330	-7.3	2,364	16	91	31	...	...	330	-7.3
Northwest Territories	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Provincial Total	76,716	-2.5	1,430	17	14	29	5,536	...	82,252	-3.4
Federal Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,024	4,464	7,488	1.2

¹ The rate per 10,000 adults charged calculation is based on Criminal Code and Federal Statutes offences only.

² The total community caseload excludes 236 other types of federal releases.

... figures not available.

... figures not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Characteristics of Offenders on Admission to the Correctional System

The following section presents an analysis of offender characteristics upon admission to either custody or a community supervision program. As noted earlier, 72% (234,732) of all correctional admissions in 1995-96 were to a custodial facility. The provincial/territorial offender characteristics are based on 114,562 sentenced admissions and 4,402 federal offenders. The remaining number of admissions (115,768) were either remanded or other/temporary detained offenders.

Women represent less than 10% of admissions

In 1995-96, males represented 91% and females 9% of sentenced admissions to provincial/territorial adult correctional facilities. Women have accounted for 9% of all sentenced admissions since 1991-92. In 1995-96, the median⁶ age of sentenced offenders on admission was 31, up from a median of 28 years in 1991-92.

While women are under-represented in the admissions population, aboriginal peoples are over-represented. Aboriginal peoples accounted for 16% of total sentenced admissions, down from 18% in 1993-94 and 24% in 1991-92. While natives made up less than 9% of provincial sentenced admissions to custody in all provinces east of Manitoba in 1995-96, they accounted for 72% in Saskatchewan, 55% in Manitoba, 36% in Alberta and 17% in British Columbia (Table 3). Overall, the number of Aboriginal peoples in the correctional population is more than five times their representation in the Canadian population (3%).

Over the past five years, the profile of federally sentenced offenders has changed only slightly. As in the provincial sector, almost all (97%) sentenced admissions to federal institutions were males. The average age of sentenced offenders was 33 years, up slightly from 32 years in 1991-92. Aboriginal peoples represented 12% of all sentenced admissions, increasing from 11% in 1991-92 (Table 3).

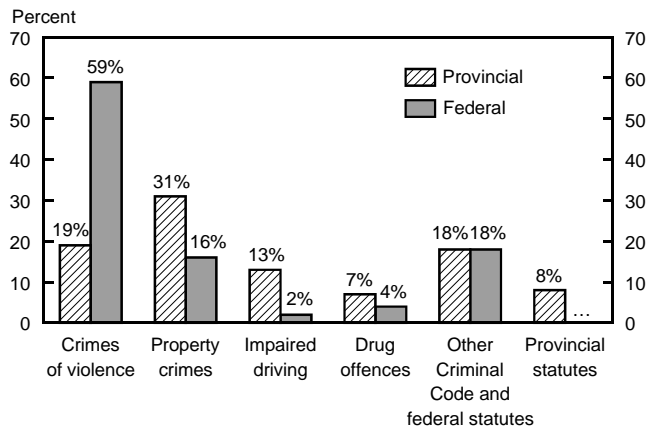
Property crimes account for the greatest percentage of provincial/territorial admissions

Most provinces/territories report the most serious offences for which persons are incarcerated. This means that if the offender is sentenced on more than one offence, the most serious of these offences is reported. Almost one-third of sentenced admissions in the nine provinces reporting data on the most serious offence or disposition, were offenders convicted of property offences (31%) (Figure 6). The next largest group of offenders were sentenced for crimes of violence (19%), followed by impaired driving offences (13%). The median provincial sentence was 31 days. In other words, half the inmates were serving more than 31 days and half were serving less.

Two factors account for the fact that property offences account for such a high percentage of admissions (relative to offenders convicted of crimes of violence). First, crimes involving property are far more frequent than crimes of violence. In fact, property offences account for over 50% of convictions in provincial courts.

Figure 6

Most serious offence committed on admission to custody¹, 1995-96



¹ The percentage breakdown shown in this chart represents jurisdictions reporting either most serious disposition or most serious offence.

Note: At the provincial level, municipal by-laws account for the remaining 4%. Federal offence data were known for 85% of admissions.

... figure not appropriate or applicable.

Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

The second explanation is that property offenders frequently have longer criminal records. In addition to the seriousness of the offence, an offender's criminal record is one of the most important determinants with respect to the likelihood of receiving a term of incarceration.

Persons admitted to federal institutions are most likely to have been convicted of robbery

As would be expected, federally sentenced offenders were typically serving longer sentences for more serious crimes than offenders in the provincial sector (Figure 6). Specifically, robbery accounted for 24% of admissions, sexual assaults 14% and major assaults 12%. Offenders convicted of homicide represented 8% of admissions, while drug trafficking accounted for 4%. The average sentence length (excluding life sentences)⁷ for federally sentenced offenders was 46 months.

Fine defaulters continue to place demands on correctional resources

In 1995-96, the median sentence to be served on admission to provincial/territorial facilities was 31 days, a small decrease from 33 days in the previous year. This median sentence length is markedly skewed by the shorter sentences associated with the large number of fine defaulters (31,149 or 26% of sentenced admissions) who are required to serve a short jail sentence in default of paying a fine.

⁶ A median represents the mid point when the values are arranged in order of magnitude, one-half of the observations have a value less than the median and one-half have a value greater than the median.

⁷ Offenders serving a life sentence accounted for 4.3% of federal sentenced admissions.

Though a number of jurisdictions have established “fine option” programs to divert fine defaulters from jail, fine default continues to account for a larger proportion of the total number of admissions. There was considerable variation across the country in terms of the percentage of fine default admissions, ranging from 5% in New Brunswick to 38% in Alberta.

Number of accused remanded to custody remains unchanged

In 1995-96, non-sentenced admissions⁸ totalled 115,768, of which 106,467 (92%) were remand admissions (Table 3). The 1995-96 total continues the downward trend and represents a decrease of 6% over the previous year and 9% since 1991-92. The vast majority of the accused persons on remand status are incarcerated for a short period of time relative to the general prison population - the median length of stay in jail for persons remanded to custody was six days.

Four jurisdictions followed the national decrease in remand admissions from 1994-95 to 1995-96. They were: Manitoba (-27%); Ontario (-7%); Quebec (-6%) and Alberta (-3%). Six jurisdictions reported increases: British Columbia (12%); Yukon (10%); Nova Scotia (8%); New Brunswick (4%); Saskatchewan (4%) and Prince Edward Island (2%). Newfoundland reported no change for the same time period (Table 3).

Females are more likely to get probation

Provincially, 17% of all probationers were female (Table 5), while representing only 9% of the sentenced inmate population. The percent distribution of female probationers in the jurisdictions varied from 22% in Alberta to 11% in Quebec. Aboriginal offenders accounted for 14% of all probation intakes in 1995-96, up from 13% the previous year.

⁸ Non-sentenced admissions include persons admitted on remand while awaiting trial or other forms of temporary detention such as an immigration hold.

⁹ See *Sentencing in Adult Provincial Courts*. Statistics Canada, Juristat Vol. 17, No. 1.

The average length of probation term remains one year

The national median period of probation was one year in 1995-96. This statistic is unchanged since 1991-92. Over half the probation terms imposed in 1995-96 were between six months and one year in duration. Two provinces had median probation lengths significantly above the national level: Quebec (26 months) and Newfoundland (20 months).

Men more likely than women to be put on probation for crimes of violence

Overall, 40% of the offenders who received a sentence of probation had been convicted of a crime of violence, 33% for a crime involving property and 6% for impaired driving. This does not necessarily mean that 40% of offenders received only probation for a crime of violence. A significant number of these offenders would have received another sentence in addition to the probation term. Previous research has shown that over one-quarter of probation terms imposed in provincial courts were accompanied by a period of imprisonment.⁹

When the probation statistics are broken down by gender, an interesting pattern emerges. In most provinces, men sentenced to probation are more likely to have been convicted of a crime of violence, while women were more likely to be placed on probation for crimes against property. This finding is independent of the fact that men are more likely to commit (and be convicted of) violent crimes. Across Canada, of all men sentenced to probation, 42% had been convicted of a crime of violence compared to 34% of a crime involving property. For women sentenced to probation however, 23% had been convicted of a crime of violence, compared to 53% of a crime involving property. This gender difference may reflect the possibility that men were more likely than women to receive a term of probation as well as a term of imprisonment.

Types of Conditional Release

There are three types of conditional release by which federal offenders can be released into the community; day parole, full parole and statutory release.

1) Full Parole is a form of conditional release, granted at the discretion of parole authorities, which allows an offender to serve part of a prison sentence in the community. The offender is placed under supervision and is required to abide by conditions designed to reduce the risk of re-offending and to foster re-integration of the inmate into the community. Under full parole, the person does not have to return nightly to an institution, but must report regularly to a parole supervisor, and in certain cases, to the police.

2) Day Parole provides offenders with the opportunity to participate in on-going community-based activities. Ordinarily, the offender resides at a correctional institution or community residence. Offenders are also granted day parole in order to prepare for full parole and statutory release.

3) Statutory Release requires that federally sentenced offenders serve the final third of their sentence in the community under supervision and under conditions of release similar to those imposed on offenders released on full parole. Offenders on statutory release are therefore inmates who either did not apply for release on parole, or who were denied release on full parole.

Provincial and federal full parole eligibility

Not all inmates are eligible to be considered for parole release, those in provincial institutions sentenced to a term of six months or longer are automatically eligible for parole consideration after having served six months. Inmates serving shorter sentences must apply for parole consideration. Federal offenders are normally eligible for full parole after serving one-third of their sentence, although the sentencing judge may set eligibility at one-half the sentence in cases of certain more serious offences. They are eligible for day parole six months prior to their full parole eligibility except in the provinces with their own parole board. Offenders serving life and indeterminate sentences have longer waiting periods before they can apply for parole.

While on parole or statutory release, the offender must conform to a set of release conditions. Standard conditions such as the requirement for offenders to remain within a specific area of the National Parole Board (NPB), keep the peace, be of good behaviour and obey the law, report to a parole supervisor and the police as required, keep the parole supervisor informed about changes of residence or employment, and refrain from criminal associates and contacts.

Additional conditions may be imposed for the specific needs of the offenders. For example, a board may require an offender to refrain from possession of firearms, to refrain from the use of alcohol and/or non-prescribed drugs, to reside in a halfway house for a period of time, or to attend a treatment or training program.

The number of offenders on full parole decreases

The average count of offenders on full parole on March 31, 1996 was 8,493. In the last two years, the average full parole count has decreased by 8% each year. However, the 1995-96 figure is 8% higher than in 1991-92. The jurisdictional trends since 1993-94 mirror the national picture, with Ontario showing the largest decrease (-42%) over the previous two years, and the NPB (provincial offenders) showing a 45% decrease. The number of federally sentenced offenders on full parole went down as well (11%). Quebec and British Columbia reported increases of 6% and 3% respectively for the same two-year period.

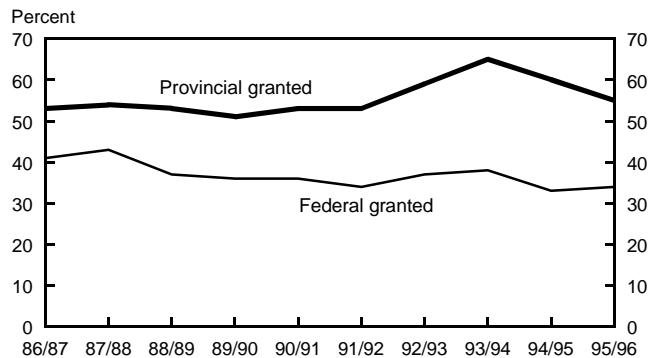
Full parole grant rates for provincial parole boards continue to decline

The changes in the number of individuals on full parole reflect changes in the parole grant rate. For the second straight year, provincial parole boards granted 5% fewer full paroles, but since 1991-92, the number of full paroles granted increased slightly (2%). The three provincial parole boards show very different patterns in their grant rates over the five-year period. The parole grant rate has decreased in Ontario: from 52% to 42%. The grant rate in British Columbia declined from 61% in 1991-92 to 48% in 1995-96. In Quebec, however, the parole grant rate rose from 53% in 1991-92 to 68% in 1995-96.

In contrast to the provincial parole boards, the full parole grant rate for federal inmates is considerably lower due to the more serious nature of the offences committed. The full parole grant rate for federal inmates in 1995-96 was 34%, which has remained the same as in 1991-92 (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Full parole granted, 1986-87 to 1995-96



Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Use of day parole declines steadily since 1991-92

The NPB has the authority to grant day parole to offenders under its jurisdiction, the majority (95%, 1,212) being federal offenders. In 1995-96, the number of releases to day parole decreased by 15% from the previous year. The grant rate of day parole applications declined in 1995-96 for the fourth consecutive year. In 1995-96, 59% of applications for day parole were granted. This is down from 67% in 1991-92.

Few paroles are revoked

When offenders serve part of their sentence in the community, they can be returned to prison if they violate the conditions of parole or commit a new offence. In 1995-96, 1,277 offenders had their parole revoked by the NPB, a 16% decline from the previous year. Of the total number of parole revocations, 94% were federal offenders and 6% were provincial offenders.

Number of inmates on statutory release increasing

Many federal offenders who are not granted parole must be released into the community after having served two-thirds of their sentence. This process is known as statutory release.

The following types of offenders are not eligible for statutory release: offenders serving a life or indeterminate sentence (e.g. dangerous offenders) and those offenders who have been ordered detained by the NPB in view of their likelihood of committing an offence causing death or serious harm prior to the expiry of their sentence. A few offenders choose not to be released on statutory release because they would rather serve their entire sentence in prison than submit to the conditions of supervision that would be placed on them. In 1995-96, an average count of 2,700 federal offenders were released into the community under statutory release provisions. This represents a 2% increase over the previous year.

Suicide most frequent cause of death in the correctional population

There were 94 inmate deaths across Canada in 1995-96 (Figure 8). Of these, 46 occurred within the provincial inmate population and 48 within the federal inmate population. The most common cause of death was suicide, which accounted for 28 of all deaths in provincial/territorial correctional institutions, and 17 in federal penitentiaries. The number of suicides increased in both the provincial/territorial and the federal correctional populations from 1994-95 to 1995-96. The increase was most apparent in the provincial/territorial population where the number of suicides grew from 18 to 28 over this period. There were 2 murders committed within each of the provincial and federal inmate populations in 1995-96. When looked at as a rate per 10,000 adults, the inmate suicide rate is more than twice that found in the adult Canadian population (4.0 and 1.7 respectively).

Escapes are rare

From 1991-92 to 1994-95, there were no escapes from federal multi-level or maximum security institutions; in 1995-96, one inmate escaped. In federal medium security penitentiaries, 6 escapes were reported in 1995-96. The number of escapes from provincial/territorial institutions is considerably higher. Of the 266 offenders unlawfully at large, 126 escapes were from secure facilities and the remaining 140 were from open facilities.

Figure 8

Causes of death in the federal and provincial custodial population



¹ Other includes deaths from natural causes, accidental, etc.
Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Expenditures on Adult Correctional Services

Keeping an offender behind bars costs an average of \$42,300 per year

Government spending on adult corrections in Canada for 1995-96 was \$1.92 billion, compared with \$1.89 billion in 1994-95 (Figure 9). Taking inflation into account, total operating expenditures decreased 1% in 1995-96 and 3% from four years earlier. Federal expenditures in 1995-96 amounted to \$948.9 million, up 4% from the previous year and 8% over five years ago. When adjusted for inflation, federal expenses rose 2% in both 1995-96

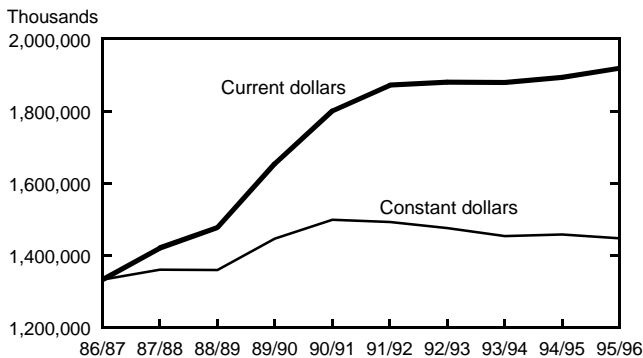
and over the same five year period. Provincial expenditures dropped 3% to \$970.0 million, and 8% over the past five years (down 1% and 3% respectively when adjusted for inflation).

The average annual cost of housing an offender in a federal penitentiary was \$46,250, an increase of 4% since 1994-95. At the provincial level, the average annual cost of keeping an offender behind bars, regardless of the hold status, was \$39,470 which represents an increase of less than one percent (0.2%) from the previous year.

More detailed analysis on the cost of adult corrections is discussed in the "Justice Spending in Canada" Juristat Vol. 17 No. 3, released in February 1997.

Figure 9

Total operating expenditures, 1986-87 to 1995-96 (in current and constant 1986-87 dollars)



Source: Adult Corrections Survey, CCJS.

Methodology and Data Limitations

The information presented in this Juristat is based on the operation of adult correctional services in Canada which is collected through the Adult Corrections Survey. This survey is conducted annually (on a fiscal year basis from April to March) and is designed to collect caseload and case characteristics information on adult offenders (18 years and over). The survey captures custodial and community corrections data for both provincial/territorial and federal corrections sectors.

For 1993-94 to 1995-96, the Northwest Territories could not provide community corrections caseload data. Accordingly, information from this jurisdiction has been excluded from all calculations.

Data relating to operating expenditures are also collected on a fiscal year basis through the Resource, Expenditures and Personnel Survey. It is important to note that the expenditure data reported do not include "capital costs" which are incurred over and above daily operational costs.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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