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HAMPSHIRE PROBATION & AFTER-CARE COMMITTEE

STUDY TOUR - HOLLAND

NOVEMBER 1974

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STUDY VISIT TO HOLLAND

14-20 OCTOBER 1974

This visit was made possible by the Hampshire Probation and After-Care Committee. It was instigated by the Committee's Chairman, Judge M. Lee, D.S.C., Q.C., in order that Mr. Percy Russell, O.B.E. (Chief Probation Officer for Hampshire) Mr. John Coker (Deputy Chief Probation Officer for Hampshire) and myself (Vice Chairman of the Hampshire Probation and After-Care Committee) should examine the reasons for the low rate of committals to prison in Holland (22 people per 100,000 compared to 68 per 100,000 in the United Kingdom) and to try to evaluate some of the schemes the Dutch have for treating the offender in the community.

Our programme was arranged by the Ministry of Justice at The Hague. Dr. J.H. Winkler, Head of the Staff and Financial Affairs Section, made the arrangements, having been told by John Coker of the sort of things we particularly wanted to see.

We arrived on the evening of Sunday, 13th October, were met by Dr. Winkler and his 10 year old daughter at the airport and taken in his car to our hotel, thus setting the pattern for the kindness and hospitality of all the Dutch people we met during our week's stay in Holland.

Our Programme of Visit was as follows:-

- Monday 14th October 11a.m. We all visited the Psychiatric Treatment and Probation and After-Care Department (TBR en Reclassering) of the Ministry of Justice, Koninginnegracht 19, The Hague, and were welcomed by Dr. A. Goedemans, Director, and by Dr. J.H. Winkler, Head of the Staff and Financial Affairs Section.
- 2.30p.m. Mr. Russell and Mr. Coker visited the Netherlands Society for Probation and After-Care in The Hague, and I visited 'Valkenheide' Training School for Boys, Valkenheide 26, Maarsbergen.
- 15th October We spent the morning at the Haarlem Probation Board where we met Dr. W. Janssen who was the Secretary of the Board and part-time Public Prosecutor, and Dr. F. de Groot, who was Vice-President of the District Court and a Juvenile Judge.
- In the afternoon we all three visited the Jellinek Clinic, Keizersgracht 674, Amsterdam.
- After dinner we dropped in on one of the many J.A.C.'s (Juvenile Advice Centres) which exist in most of the major cities in Holland.

16th October We made an all-day visit to the Dr. Henri van der Hoeven Clinic, Arentzstraat 15, Utrecht.

17th October Mr. Russell visited the Probation and After-Care Section of the Salvation Army in the Hague, and also Dr. Tjaden, retired Head of the Dutch Probation Service. Mr. Coker and I visited the Central Office of the four co-operating probation and after-care societies, Zuiderparkweg 280, Den Bosch.

18th October We all spent the morning at the Overlegcentrum, Kerkstraat 257. This is another Advice Centre for young people.

19th October Mr. Russell and Mr. Coker visited the Remand House I of Amsterdam.

Visit to the Psychiatric Treatment and Probation and After-Care Department (TBR en Reclassering) and the Ministry of Justice:

The Director of this Department, Dr. A. Goedemans, welcomed us and gave us a short history of the growth of Probation and After-Care in Holland.

History.

There were originally six rehabilitation societies in Holland, the first founded as early as 1823 by some admirers of John Howard and most of them with a religious bias. They are:-

1. The Netherlands Society
2. The Protestant Society
3. The Catholic Society
4. The Salvation Army Society
5. Dr. Meyer's Society - (dealing with mentally disturbed offenders)
6. The Alcoholics' Bureau

Today all these Societies, except the Salvation Army and Dr. Meyer's Society, have fused into one Central Bureau which has its headquarters in Den Bosch and which is funded 100% by the Ministry of Justice as to salaries, plus 10% towards running costs. We visited this Central Office later in the week.

Publicity.

Once a year a Probation Day is held in Holland. This is a public relations exercise, and is an extremely effective way of bringing the work of the service to the attention of the country. They have a flag day in the streets, and broadcasting and television stations have programmes about probation work. Dr. Goedemans admitted ruefully that apart from the importance of holding this from a publicity point of view, money collected from the flags had diminished over the last five years; until last year the proceeds only just covered the costs. However, this year all the emphasis was put on collecting money for victims of offences. As a result of this the proceeds were a great deal higher than in previous years.

Staff.

There are about 670 probation officers, generally known as social workers, in Holland attached to the rehabilitation societies. In addition to these there are 40 state probation officers employed directly by the Ministry of Justice and linked to the 19 Regional Probation Boards.

Probation officers have just started working on an experimental basis in prisons, rather like our liaison probation officers in borstals. There are 60 of these at present in post. Probation officers undergo a 4 year training programme. They are all graduates from the various social academies, which, incidentally, produce annually many more social workers than the country can absorb. After this initial training there is a further 2 years in-service training for officers. The whole 4 year training programme is subsidised wholly by the Ministry of Justice. The pay of the ordinary officer is 2,845 guilders per month basic (£500). This is 500 guilders per month more than is received by school teachers in Holland. Probation officers are paid better than social workers in other fields. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has publicised the reason for the high salary structure of the Service in announcing that "We think the future of crime prevention lies in extra-mural treatment. These people need the extra money because they are working in an involved capacity."

TBR en Reclassering.

Mentally abnormal offenders in Holland are dealt with in one of three different ways. They may receive either:-

1. an ordinary prison sentence
2. a hospital order
3. prison plus TBR. This means that they are retained at the Government's disposal and this sentence is, therefore, an indeterminate one.

Judges today tend to give fewer TBR sentences and more short prison sentences, even to the mentally disturbed. We were told that this reflects the public's growing dissatisfaction with a totally psychoanalytical approach to offences. A prisoner serving a TBR sentence spends the first part of his sentence in an ordinary prison. Prisoners are then sent to a classifying centre where they spend about six to eight weeks and where the type of psychiatric treatment most suitable for them is decided upon. From there they are sent to a mental institute which may be either a large state one where little actual treatment is given, or to a private psychoanalytically orientated one.

There are several institutions of this sort in Holland. The most famous which we visited later in the week was the Van de Hoeven Clinic in Utrecht. There is also the Van Pompe Clinic, which was in a state of crisis when we were in Holland. The Director had resigned. Patients had committed several spectacular offences against the local inhabitants, and the whole stability of the Institution was threatened. Another very well known clinic, Groot Batelaar, is run by the Salvation Army and this, unfortunately, we did not visit.

The Ministry is hoping to be able to open these clinics shortly to non-offending psychiatric patients, and eventually to take steps to make the Dutch Health Service responsible for the treatment of TBR patients. The process of being released from TBR is a complicated one. At the time of trial psychiatric and probationary reports are made available to the Judge. After serving two years of the sentence the trial judge reconsiders each case, and at this stage can either release or put the patient back for one or two years. After that time, the patient's progress is checked annually by a civil judge. At the time of our visit there were 900 people in TBR institutions.

Homelessness.

We asked about the problems of the homeless man on release from prison, and were told that there were very few of these people in Holland. There are no after-care hostels, except one or two run by the Salvation Army, and very few people are in need of hostel accommodation. This is because the tradition of close-knit family relationships is still strong in most parts of Holland. The only exception seems to be Amsterdam where there is a large and ever-growing population ranging from serious students through all types of drop-outs, hippies, drug pedlars, to the professional criminal racketeer.

Immigrants.

Like us the Dutch has been colonisers. However, the problems of their immigrant population are not so severe as are ours. When the Dutch East Indies became independent there was a great influx of East Indians to Holland, but they arrived for the most part in family groups and were quickly housed and integrated into the community. The Dutch tolerance and friendliness was exemplified at this time in that vacant rooms in houses were requisitioned to serve as temporary accommodation for these people. One has only to remember the conditions in which the Ugandan Asians arriving in this country had to live to perceive the difference between Dutch and English attitudes. For years single men have been coming alone to this

country from Ireland, Scotland, the West Indies and from many parts of the world to work as unskilled labour. Usually they only send for their families to join them when they are established, if at all, or else arrive as school leavers to join a relation whom they may not have seen for years. The resulting lack of family support and loss of identification and security makes many of these people become delinquent. There was, however, an article recently in New Society showing a disturbing increase in crimes of vandalism and violence perpetrated by young coloured lads from the Dutch West Indies, who are beginning to arrive in Holland in similar circumstances.

During the afternoon Mr. Russell and Mr. Coker visited the Netherlands Society for Probation and After-Care in The Hague, and I went to see the Valkenheide Training School for Boys.

Valkenheide Training School for Boys.

I made this visit because I particularly wanted to see something of the facilities for institutional care of juvenile offenders in Holland, although, of course, they are outside our direct field of interest during this trip.

This Institution is a private one, subsidised 90% by the Ministry of Justice and the remaining 10% coming from the organising Trust that runs it. It has been in existence for sixty years.

It is situated in a big and beautifully landscaped park of 80 hectares with a central administrative building, a modern secretarial block, and eleven houses in which the boys live in groups of 11 or 12, scattered round yet another complex - the school and workshops. It has, at present, 114 boys between the ages of 12 and 18 in residence. The average stay in the Institution used to be four or five years, but in the last two years it has fallen to an average stay of two to two and a half years. Nearly all the residents are referred from the courts, having been in trouble with the law.

To this school and to these workshops, either as full-time scholars or by way of day release courses, come 326 non-delinquent boys from the local towns and villages. The philosophy of the Institution is to encourage their residents to make friends with the non-delinquent families, and for these families to offer support in the way of visits and holidays and continued interest. They have just started a new system of long and short weekend leave for all the inmates. It was interesting to hear that on the first long weekend this term there were only 15 boys out of 114 who had to remain in the school through having no home to go to.

Staffing.

There is a very high ratio of staff to boys; each house has four fully qualified child care officers in attendance on it. There are also 55 qualified teachers and training instructors, and 2 resident psychologists. There is a large catering staff. I found it curious that women are only employed in the catering department and not in any of the caring or even nursing positions.

Methods of Treatment.

Treatment is individually tailored to the boys' needs and previous deprivation. If the boy has been over-protected then he is encouraged to become more self-reliant and mature, and if previously deprived of affection and allowed to run wild then he may undergo a more disciplined regime. Because of this experimental approach the Deputy Governor told me that there are many differences of opinion among the staff, many of whom tend not to stay very long at the Institution. One can understand very well how these different regimes can lead to upsets and frequent resignations among the staff.

However, the idea of involving the local community in the lives of delinquent boys to this extent seemed an excellent one. The boys I saw, playing football, listening to record players or riding high-powered motor bikes, looked remarkably relaxed, unaggressive and free.

Visit to Haarlem, 15th October a.m..

We went by train to Haarlem to meet Dr. W. Janssen, Secretary of the Probation Board and part-time Public Prosecutor, and Dr. F. de Groot, Vice President of the District Court and a Juvenile Judge.

Haarlem is a delightful, old fashioned provincial city, dominated by its cathedral and the great dome of its local prison. It has a population of 170,000 in the city itself, and the Court serves half million inhabitants from the city and the district surrounding it.

Dr. de Groot explained to us the Court system in Holland. The country is divided into 19 districts, each with its own Court and with its own Public Prosecutor and its own Probation Board. Beneath these there are 62 Canton Courts dealing with very minor offences, including 80% of the traffic offences committed in the country. Many civil cases are also tried in these Canton Courts. There are 5 courts of Appeal and one Supreme Court in The Hague. There is no jury system in Holland. District Court Judges sit in threes when dealing with serious offences, though the Juvenile

Judge can sit alone. There is also a Police Judge for minor offences, who can also adjudicate by himself, and one Civil Judge attached to each District Court. There are 15 Judges on the Haarlem Bench; four of them are women and the first of these was appointed five years ago. The training of Judges is markedly different to that in this country and has, we felt, a lot to do with the very different attitude to sentencing in Holland. Having obtained their Doctorate of Law, they serve for about two years either in the Governor-grade in prisons, in rehabilitation societies, or in police or public prosecutors' offices. In this way they are brought into very close contact with offenders for a third of the six or seven years of their training. Finally, they are carefully vetted by the Ministry of Justice, and are appointed by the Queen for life (or, at least, until they are 70!) Dr. de Groot said that the prison population in Holland at present would be double or more than double the present figure if their Judges sentenced on the same sort of tariffs as ours do. A three year sentence for robbery by a young man of 24 with a long list of previous convictions for burglary is a very heavy sentence in Holland!

However, Judges are becoming tougher. They could previously afford shorter sentences, but professionally organised crimes and violent offences are increasing in Holland, as elsewhere, and people, including Judges, are asking whether the system of short sentences has not failed.

Amsterdam, in particular, is becoming the Common Market centre for criminals. As we were told in The Hague, Judges also are not giving TBR sentences so much now. In-service training for Judges seems to be by way of post-university weekend seminars.

When we visited Haarlem there were 2,502 people in prison in Holland, including 35 women. Of these 919 were young offenders between the ages of 16 and 22 years, and 264 were 22 to 24 years old. However, a great many people are held in police custody - 12,000 per year in Amsterdam alone. This is almost 20 per 100,000 of the population compared to 70 per 100,000 in the United Kingdom.

The Public Prosecutor, Dr. Janssen, then told us about the work of his Probation Board. There are 12 members of the Board, all appointed by the Ministry of Justice. The appointment is for six years, with one possibility of re-appointment. Among his members are a Judge, a Lecturer, a Police Commissioner, a Social Administrator, and a Doctor. Members are paid on an hourly basis for attending meetings. They combine the functions of local Parole Boards and Probation Committees. Their tasks are

supervising the Law Courts, dealing with prison administration and with the rehabilitation of offenders. Only those sentenced by the Judge to prison with supervision (a sort of custody and control order) have after-care supervision. There is no feed-back to the Board as to the success or failure of these supervision orders. They only know if the offender breaches his parole with another offence. They are mostly concerned with pre-trial social enquiry reports, or initiating a very loose and voluntary form of supervision instead of sentence.

A Public Prosecutor has total autonomy when someone is charged with an offence as to whether he brings him to trial. 40% of offences committed are not brought to Court. The only people remanded in custody are recidivists, foreigners (being of no fixed abode) and those charged with grave and violent offences.

For the last year offenders taken to the Police Station on a charge have the right to be visited within 12 hours, if they wish, by a Probation Officer and a lawyer. In many cases these visits result in the man being set free with an admonition and some sort of supervision.

We returned from Haarlem at lunch time after an excellent and inexpensive omelette in the Amsterdam Station Hotel with its white table cloths, large linen table napkins, and a regular clientele lovingly cherished by a posse of old-fashioned, black-coated waiters.

The Jellinek Clinic.

This is a private institution dealing mostly with alcoholics, though the Complex also treats drug addicts. It is situated in what was formerly a bank, and, indeed, still retains its marble entrance hall and grandiose staircase. It stands on one of the most elegant canals, the Keizersgracht. It gives the appearance of having been rather shoddily transformed into a clinic. One peers over flimsy partitions erected in the banking halls to see patients lying in bed.

We were received by a woman social worker attached to the Clinic, who works for the Alcoholics Rehabilitation Society. She told us something of the regime of the clinic and her own work. The clinic has 50 beds in this building, though they own another house where there are beds for women drug addicts and alcoholics. There is a long waiting list to enter the clinic for residential treatment. Treatment consists of, firstly, detoxification, and then therapy combined with Antabuse. Some of the patients, this woman told us, will probably remain at the clinic for ever, though the average stay is about three months. Two lapses from grace are allowed, and after

that the patient is required to leave. There are also several patients who attend on a daily basis.

The clientele of the clinic are 75% non-offenders and 25% offenders. Those patients who are not bed-bound assist in the cleaning, cooking and general care of the institution. This housework is done in the morning after breakfast; the patients then have group therapy; they have dinner at 12, and during the afternoon and evening patients are allowed to have visitors. Handicrafts and such group activities as singing, acting and poetry-reading are encouraged.

Before they are discharged from the clinic patients are always offered a contact with A.A. The social worker told us that though she had no statistics, she thought that about half the clientele of the clinic did not get into trouble again. She equated success with keeping out of prison, not necessarily with stopping drinking. As a Probation Officer this woman carries out pre-sentence reports for the Courts for those people who have committed offences under the influence of drugs or drink.

If clients are put on probation from the Courts, they have to attend the clinic at least once a month. Most of the orders are for two years. The social worker has a caseload of 50. She obviously relates very closely to her clients. She always accompanies them to Court. She looked absolutely exhausted, and told us that though she was entitled to four weeks holiday a year she hardly ever took any and works 24 hours a day!

If a patient is sent to the clinic on remand from the Court and then absconds, the clinic does not feel bound to inform the Court. They also run a half-way house for homeless ex-alcoholic men. It has two resident nurses, and though it is subsidised, the men are expected to pay for their board and lodging.

JAC.

In the last few years a great many young people's advice centres have been set up in Holland, some run by the Probation Service, one by the Free University of Amsterdam, and some by voluntary bodies. We visited two of the centres during our week in Holland.

The first is called JAC and it has branches in many major Dutch cities. This centre is open for walk-in contacts every night between 7p.m. and 10a.m., though the office is staffed during the day for administrative and crisis work. Professional social workers are available always, and psychiatrists, doctors and lawyers attend the centre on a part-time basis during the week.

JAC specialises in helping teenagers. These young people often come to the JAC having run away from home or from institutions. The social workers do not automatically turn the children over to the authorities, but try to work positively with the parents, children and the law in order to bring about the best solution for the young people themselves. Occasionally they refer teenagers to a crisis centre where they can stay for up to 10 days while the problem is dealt with.

JAC is also involved with various sorts of prohibited behaviour. They publish a broadsheet during the summer giving information about the drug scene. There was a notice on the wall during our visit advertising the total paralysis brought on in a very short time by those using a particularly adulterated form of heroin, showing how it could be recognised and stressing the importance of obtaining a doctor's help immediately.

They also give advice on abortions, which are still illegal in Holland, and gynaecologists are available for abortion advice.

The young man we spoke to was intelligent, well qualified and experienced, a graduate from Amsterdam University and engaged in writing a thesis for his Master's Degree. Having worked at the Centre for two years, he felt personally that at 27 years of age he was too old for this sort of work. He is married to an English girl, and is exploring the possibilities of coming to work here later this year.

JAC told us that they see about 8,000 people every year, but during our visit of about an hour and a half after dinner there were only two clients in the friendly open-plan room they use as a reception area. Pop music was being played and endless cups of coffee were being drunk, and the whole atmosphere was welcoming and unstuffy.

Overleg Centrum:

We visited this second crisis agency one morning later in the week. This was started in October 1972 as a two year experiment by the Ministry of Justice, who were persuaded to fund it by a body of young Probation Officers, who, as they said, "bargained with the knife on the table". This particular group of young people are very militantly radical, but it is interesting to observe the tolerance shown to their views by the Establishment. They told us that they considered that to deal in social work was to deal in politics; that no advance in the pattern of human behaviour will be achieved until the structure of society is changed. They were passionate advocates of total and equal participation of clients and social workers. There is no Director, so we were told by the young man we talked to, although, in fact, he had obviously been the instigator of

this scheme, was responsible for writing up its progress and, with his colleagues, for determining the pattern of work carried out in his set-up.

The Overleg Centrum supports the Action Group for legalising cannabis. Like JAC, they are involved with the runaway teenager. Like JAC as well, they appear to have a very good relationship with the police, and were full of praise for the work of the Youth Police who dealt with juvenile offenders and who, they said, are far more understanding than the ordinary police.

It was difficult to find out exactly what this Centre achieves in terms of figures, referrals, successes or failures. Their books had been stolen in June 1973. Since then they had dealt with 250 people. This seemed to us a rather expensive experiment, but, as I said, we were impressed by the Ministry of Justice's willingness to support unorthodox ways of establishing contact and trust with young people, and to allow the social workers concerned a free rein in the running of these agencies.

Visit to Van der Hoeven Clinic in Utrecht.

On the Wednesday of our visit we spent the whole day at the famous Van der Hoeven Clinic in Utrecht. This was founded 15 years ago by a private society. It is now fully subsidised by the Ministry of Justice.

When we visited there were 65 patients there, including 8 women, living in groups of about 8 to 12, and for the last two and a half years the women have been living in the same units as the men. This clinic is run by a woman Director, Dr. Rosenberg, who is also a psychiatrist. There is a very high ratio of staff to patients - in fact, there are over 100 staff. These consist of group workers, who are attached to the 7 living groups; treatment programme supervisors, group work consultants, psychological therapists, and two full-time teachers who are assisted by a group of university students acting as assistant teachers. There is a large group of creative teachers who teach mime and psychodrama. There are two full-time sports instructors, two part-time judo instructors, workshop instructors and two or three domestic supervisors.

Patients at this clinic are selected from among the most dangerous and disturbed mentally abnormal offenders in Holland. They are all serving TBR sentences. They have all spent some time in a conventional prison, but at a certain time in their sentence they are sent to special selection Institutes. Here they remain for 6 to 8 weeks while the decision is made as to the appropriate mental institution where they should be treated.

A member of staff from the Van der Hoeven Clinic has an initial interview with each prospective patient at the selection institute, having first informed him or herself in the minutest detail as to the

family and criminal background. If the interviewer considers the patient to be suitable for treatment, he returns again, but this time will bring with him a patient currently resident at the clinic so that when the new arrival appears in the community he or she will already know at least two people there.

Programmes for treatment at the Van der Hoeven Clinic are worked out specifically for each separate patient, and each patient's progress is evaluated every month by his living group and by everyone who is concerned in his day-to-day life, and this group responsibility is an integral part of the therapy.

Most of the staff are young, many in their twenties, and with their long hair and informal clothes it is impossible in many cases to tell staff from patients. The average length of stay in the clinic is two and a half years, but there are some who have been there since the clinic opened and who may never be able to leave. All patients are encouraged to work. The men were involved in making camping equipment, metal frames for dolls' houses, dog baskets and fishing stools. Women made toys and did contract laundry work. They were paid a very reasonable wage compared with English prison pay rates, though it is true to say that four-fifths of the money they earn is taken away from the patients to pay for their board and keep, the emphasis again being on one's responsibility for oneself as well as for others.

We spent the morning discussing the methods of treatment practised at the clinic with one of the treatment programme supervisors, the public relations man and the Deputy Director. They were particularly worried by the quality of after-care supervision of their patients exercised by Probation Officers in the community. The staff at the clinic felt that social workers in the field were far too laissez faire for the good of these particular patients, so much so that the clinic is seriously considering setting up its own after-care service.

After lunch we were taken to see the grand new hospital building on the outskirts of Utrecht to which they hoped to move this Christmas. It will be very interesting to hear how the staff and patients adapt to their new surroundings. Ever since the clinic opened it has been housed in antiquated hospital premises attached to a dilapidated former factory housing the workshops, which has the incongruous name of 'Joy'. Living conditions in these old buildings are extremely primitive, but at the same time, almost womb-like in their cosiness. Many of the sitting rooms, therapy rooms and workshops open on to green garden courtyards. The

atmosphere is intimate and enclosed; but the new building is something quite else. It is a vast complex, built round a large central garden about 300 yards square. It has a huge indoor swimming pool, concert hall and a splendidly equipped gymnasium, all of which facilities, it is envisaged, will be offered to local schools and clubs; the emphasis here again being on linking the inmates of the institution with the community. Inmates will still live in the same groups of 8 to 12, but instead of dingy cubicles they will each have a single room and facilities for all sorts of recreation.

My feeling on trailing round this brave new campus was that it is going to be, initially at least, frighteningly large and exposed for those who have spent a long time in the confines of the old clinic. However, the whole atmosphere of the place was friendly, encouraging and non-primitive, and we were most impressed by what we saw and learnt.

Central Office of Probation (Den Bosch).

Mr. Coker and I visited this bureau and spent the morning with its Director, while Mr. Russell visited the Salvation Army Rehabilitation Society.

Organisation.

This central bureau, we had been told by Dr. Goedemans earlier in the week, is the fusion of four of the six rehabilitation societies.

The Probation Service in Holland is in the process of a fundamental reappraisal of its organisation, its priorities and loyalties. This central body hopes to play a significant part in this re-thinking, in the training programmes for Probation Officers at the Social Academies, in the career structure of the Service, in the supervision of officers' work, which has hitherto been very haphazard, and in the initiation of experimental projects. Arrangements are being made to set up 40 units throughout the country, and to regroup the 19 existing Probation Boards into 11 Regional Boards. Each unit, though relatively autonomous as to its methods of work, will be responsible to one of these new Probation Boards.

It is hoped that this whole process of reorganisation of the Service will be completed by the end of 1975.

Probation Officers in Holland have many problems to resolve, for instance, the familiar one which we encounter with some of our younger more radical officers as to whether the pre-sentence report is for the Court or to aid the offender. Some workers may refuse to prepare a report and the Judge has then to instruct one of the 40 state Probation Officers. They have far lower caseloads than our officers do and work in a more leisurely and unstructured way.

Prison welfare work, which started in Holland partly as the result of Mr. Winkler's visit to Hampshire in 1970, is not very advanced, and the working relationship between Prison Welfare Officers and Prison Officers has a long way to go.

Salvation Army Rehabilitation Society.

This is one of the original six societies concerned with the rehabilitation of the offender within the community, and is now one of the two societies which have decided to remain separate and outside the new organisation now evolving.

Mr. Russell visited one of their offices in The Hague, and was informed that the Salvation Army had made the decision to remain outside the new service because they are an international body and do not wish to give up any autonomy. Most of the Officers Mr. Russell met were not salvationists, but having originally joined the Salvation Army Probation Service they were loyally remaining in that service. It may well be that future developments will require a re-think by the organisation.

Mr. Russell was able to attend a Case Conference, with a psychiatrist in attendance, and this highlights one of the differences between the Probation Service in Holland and in our Service. This Case Conference was not especially organised, but is held weekly and the organisation is allowed sufficient funds to be able to pay for the services of a psychiatrist to join in the Conference. Except for the presences of the psychiatrist the Case Conference was similar to that which would be held in any Probation Office in England, but included in the team, in addition to the Senior Probation Officer, was one Officer whose function was that of casework consultant, and who gave most of the assistance to the Officers in the discussion about their cases.

Volunteers.

Volunteers which were used on a very large scale when Mr. Russell visited the country eight years ago are no longer made use of on anything like the same scale. This may be related to the emergent professionalism of the social worker, but fresh attempts are being made to recruit more volunteers, especially from peer groups and for specific purposes, like street corner work. The Service is also looking for volunteer families who are prepared to receive offenders into their homes.

Mr. Russell visited Dr. Tjaden whom he had met previously ten years ago when Dr. Tjaden was Head of the Dutch Probation Service. He is now retired, and adviser on probation to the United Nations and Council of Europe. Dr. Tjaden said that the Dutch were currently having a problem with the

international offender who was finding it more profitable to commit an offence in Holland where the possibility was that the sentence would be shorter than most other European countries. Dr. Tjaden said that a recommendation had been made to the Council of Europe that offenders from another country, once a finding of guilt had been made, should be deported to their own country for sentence.

Dr. Tjaden also believed that long sentences did little to deter other possible offenders, and that a man should be kept in custody for the shortest possible time commensurate with the safety of the community and the need of the offender for training.

Amsterdam Prison.

On the final day Mr. Russell and Mr. Coker visited Amsterdam Prison at the same time as a number of Prison Officers from England.

Although the building resembled that of many old English Prisons, on entering the prison one was aware of the very relaxed atmosphere, and the Officers whilst maintaining discipline were obviously able to do so in such a way that those in custody felt free to talk and express their point of view. The liberal regime which exists cannot be shown to be more effective in dealing with recidivists, but possibly it may be less destructive than our system, and certainly makes imprisonment more tolerable for the staff and inmates.

The prison only had 100 prisoners, but in addition to the prison staff had the services of a psychiatrist and four Prison Welfare Officers, and the general approach to offenders was to prepare them for return to normal life in the community. In addition to the social workers there were Group Leaders, and the prisoners were divided into small units led by one of these Leaders. The institution endeavours to have a work pattern which approximates to working conditions prevailing in the outside world, and consists mainly of work for Government establishments and a small amount of work for private firms.

One of the prisoners came and spoke to the group and answered questions, but it was typical of the attitude of the Governor that he was not willing for the party to walk round the prison looking at offenders, and the party only went round when the prisoners were all in their cells.

CONCLUSIONS.

Why have the Dutch so many fewer people proportionately in prison than we, or indeed any other Western European country? The answer seems to be almost entirely due to their attitude of mind. This attitude is reflected in the views of everyone involved in the penal system - the

public prosecutor, who brings only just over half those charged with offences to trial, the judges with their lower sentencing tariffs, the probation officers who do not believe in enforcing sanctions in their supervision orders, and those in the Prison Service.

Certainly we learnt of no new special treatment methods, or sentencing alternatives that we could copy. Indeed the Dutch do not seem to have such a wide range of alternatives to imprisonment as ourselves. They are simply more tolerant and less punitive than we are.

It appears to me that the reasons for this tolerance are both geographic and historic.

The Dutch are, and always have been, a united people living in a small, flat country. They have had to unite against their common enemy, the sea, in order to survive. Though they have a higher density of population than any other European country, they have lived, and for the most part continue to live, in small, tight-knit communities, mercantile, seafaring or agricultural. They are a democratic people. There is very little elitism apparent in their society. Stability in family life has not been affected, so far, by the decline in religious observance. Even today there are few large industrial conurbations, other than Rotterdam and Eindhoven, and the pace of life in the places we visited was gentle and unhurried.

Since the sixteenth century Holland has been a haven for religious and political refugees of all persuasions. Their universities have preached the virtues of tolerance from an early time. They have a long tradition of charitable interest and judicial reform in penal matters. A parole system, incidentally not now used, was introduced in 1886, and a Conditional Sentence in 1901. During the Second World War, and immediately afterwards, many of their citizens were imprisoned and the remembrance of this experience it is said, continues to make them aware of the futility and degradation of incarceration. The Provo Revolt in 1967, when university students throughout Holland demonstrated in favour of more tolerance from the Establishment and for a more relaxed view of society, has had a profound effect on work in the social field.

These influences have continued to make the Dutch people humane and properly concerned for the rehabilitation of those who transgress their laws. I am convinced that any move that we in this country feel able to make, both individually and collectively, to bring our own thinking on these matters closer to Dutch attitudes, will do nothing but good to our penal system.

Susan Baring.

END

7 d. l. s. / v. m. n.