

A Report on the First Six Months
of Operation of the
Ombudsman
for the
Minnesota Department of Corrections

The office of Ombudsman for the Minnesota Department of Corrections was established in 1972 by Executive Order of the Honorable Wendell R. Anderson, Governor of Minnesota. This report describes the need for the Corrections Ombudsman and how he operates. It reviews the accomplishments of the first six months of operation and lays out some goals for the future.

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Background

The Minnesota Ombudsman for Corrections is an experimental program, applying the technique of the Scandinavian Ombudsman to receive and analyze inmate grievances and forward corrective suggestions to the proper administrative agency, the governor and the legislature.

The Ombudsman, Mr. Theartrice Williams, was appointed by the Governor on April 21, 1972, and he assumed office on July 10, 1972. This project is funded through June 30, 1973, with two Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grants through the Governor's Crime Commission. The grants total \$63,650 in federal funds plus \$21,117 state matching funds.

The Goals of the Ombudsman Project

The goals of the Ombudsman project are closely tied to the goals of the Department of Corrections which is to rehabilitate the individual who will return to society.

The average length of stay for adult males in Minnesota corrections institutions is now just over two years.¹ It is necessary that every effort possible be taken to assist the individual during the short time he is institutionalized to be ready to positively adjust to society. The adjustment will be successful only when a convicted offender accepts the principle that people must live according to laws and socially acceptable principles of behavior. To obtain respect for the law it must first be shown to the offender that respect is deserved. Acting out of fear of the law has not proved to be an effective substitute for genuine respect and reliance upon it. However, prisons are not conducted according to the usual rules of law and, more importantly, there are not the usual checks and balances that exist in normal society. Therefore, the possibility for arbitrary or misunderstood actions occurring to inmates exist.

Internal grievance procedures operated by the institutional staff are not effective in assisting inmates with perceived problems. An unbiased third party is needed to investigate and arbitrate complaints of both inmates and staff and this is the crux of the Ombudsman job. His goal is to open up communications and provide procedural safeguards to ensure that fair treatment, according to well defined rules and procedures, is maintained. It has become obvious during the first six months of operation that the Ombudsman also acts as a safety valve to assist in releasing frustrations, thus preventing potentially dangerous situations from erupting into violence.

¹Action Planning for Correctional Change 1972, Minnesota Department of Corrections, St. Paul, Minnesota 1972

Prisoners' Rights

Prisoners do have rights and responsibilities around which disagreements with the staff occur. For instance, the Inmates Handbook for Stillwater Prison discusses the privileges involved in personal and group visits, correspondence, work, education, clothing, food, personal property, health care, canteen privileges, medical, legal and religious services, the library, athletics, radio programs, motion pictures, etc.

If a prisoner behaves improperly, any or all of these privileges can be removed. The ultimate punishment is to be segregated from the other prisoners and kept in isolation for a period of time—the length of which depends on the offense committed. The following are some of the offenses for which an inmate can receive punishment:

Wasting food	Improper dress	Unauthorized tasks
Unsanitary behavior	Obstructing cell doors	Disturbing other prisoners
Failure to report for duty	Loitering	Being in an unauthorized area
Gambling	Verbal abuse	Smoking in an unauthorized area
Sniffing chemicals	Malingering	Missing count
Disorderly conduct	Intoxication	Unauthorized use of property
Destruction of property	Disobeying orders	Refusing to work
Bribery	Unlawful assembly	Altering records
Assault	Copulation	Sodomy
Attempting escape	Theft	Refusing shakedown
Extortion	Arson	
Riot	Interferring with an officer	
Homicide	Threatening staff	
Smuggling	Holding hostage	
Inciting to riot		

Staff Conduct

Accusation of the performance of one of these offenses is made by prison staff. The staff also has its rules of conduct with inmates as exemplified by the following section from the Stillwater Prison's Employees' Guide.

Handling of Inmates

Employees are expected to be considerate in their contact with inmates. Inmates are confined as punishment, not for punishment and, therefore, addressing them in a demeaning manner with profanity is absolutely unacceptable. Physical and verbal abuse will not be tolerated as a measure of reprimand. Employees are authorized, however, to employ necessary physical restraint of inmates if: necessary for self-defense: to prevent an inmate from injuring himself, to prevent an inmate from assaulting another person: to prevent destruction of state property: or when placing an inmate in restraints or lockup. No employee will be permitted to threaten an inmate for personal reasons. No employee shall practice racial or religious discrimination. All employees are cautioned against

showing partiality and permitting preferential treatment of inmates except in instances pertaining to custody matters as authorized by a Classification Committee. No inmates will be permitted to violate an established regulation of this institution and all known infractions must be attended to according to an accepted procedure established by the institution.

No rules can cover all situations encountered by employees in dealing with inmates. Common sense, courtesy and consistency shall be guiding principles in situations not otherwise covered.

Relationships with Inmates

All employees are expected to maintain warm and accepting but clearly professional relationships with inmates of this institution. In discussing an inmate's problem with him, the employee should be helpful and professional, but should not discuss his own personal affairs with an inmate. Any employee wishing to assist a paroled or discharged man to obtain employment is encouraged to do so, but proper procedure must be followed. He shall notify the Associate Warden (Training and Treatment) in writing of his intention.

Inquiries addressed by persons outside the institution to an employee concerning inmates individually or in general, or requesting any other information about the institution shall be referred to the Warden or a delegated representative.

The rules on both sides are not very clear and subject to individual interpretation. Even though violation reports are heard by a disciplinary board made up of staff members, inmates often perceive that they have been unjustly charged or punished and have no outside help to turn to. As in society, the wheels of institutional justice move slowly so that inmates often wait for long periods of time before their case is heard. To other inmates, it often appears that inmates who have been accused of a violation are unjustly treated and sometimes physically maltreated while in segregated facilities. The Ombudsman serves a unique role here to defuse any rumors and reduce frustration in the general inmate population.

The cause of difficulties cannot always be placed with the inmate or the staff. Often, it is the system that is at fault. Again, the Ombudsman can play a unique role in recommending changes in policy or procedure.

The Role of the Corrections Ombudsman

The Ombudsman idea is one of the outstanding developments of public administration in this century. The first Ombudsman was established in Sweden in 1809. Its success was recognized by other countries and was adopted in national form by Finland in 1919, by New Zealand in 1961, by Norway in 1963, by Tanzania in 1965, by Guiana in 1966, and by the United Kingdom in 1967.

In recent years the Ombudsman concept has gained widespread attention as a device for controlling the rapidly expanding bureaucracy of the United States.

Hawaii established a public Ombudsman in 1967. Iowa passed a Citizens Aide Act in 1971 that covers the totality of government. Many states are presently considering the adoption of this idea.

It is often believed that the Ombudsman is some type of "super-administrator" who has the power to overrule the decisions of the various administrators and, therefore, dictates administrative policy. This is clearly not the case. The Ombudsman's only powers are to investigate and make recommendations to the department officials, civil servants, and the legislature.

The Ombudsman has the great virtue of being visible. He has the authority to investigate complaints and communicate with inmates, staff and governmental agencies, but he does not have the power to reverse, amend or otherwise alter any administrative decision.

The Minnesota Corrections Ombudsman has the following objectives:

1. Improving the relationship between staff and inmate by providing the inmates with information on the actions, motives, and design of administrative action.
2. Alleviation of tension within the prison by means of more open communications, i.e., a "release valve".
3. The improvement and clarification of administrative procedures and regulations.
4. Reorganization and revitalization of internal prison review procedures.
5. Increased access to judicial review by cooperation and coordination with the various legal aid services.
6. Encouragement of more active involvement of private and governmental agencies and interest groups in alleviating the grievances.
7. Coordination of overlapping governmental agencies by means of increased flow of information from the agencies to inmates and staff regarding functions, programs and procedures.
8. Strengthening and correcting legislation by providing the Legislature with information and recommendations regarding correctional institutions.

The Ombudsman may investigate, on complaint in writing or on his own initiative, any action of the Department of Corrections affecting an individual or individuals under the supervision of the Department. He has the authority to select his staff, organize his office and prescribe the methods by which complaints are made, reviewed and acted upon. He cannot charge any fee for his services. The Ombudsman

determines the scope and manner of investigation. He has access to all information he deems necessary to investigating complaints received, including documents and discussions with inmate and staff participants and witnesses.

The Ombudsman communicates the results of his findings and recommendations to agencies and officials he believes to be interested or are necessary for the solution of the problem under investigation. He will always discuss the recommendation with the individuals or agencies involved before formal recommendations are made. Of prime importance is the requirement that the Ombudsman present the reasons for his decisions.

The Ombudsman's Staff

The staff presently is made up of a Deputy Ombudsman, two full time field investigators, a part time field investigator (graduate student), an executive on loan from a local corporation, an administrative secretary, and a clerk stenographer.

The staff reflect the racial and sexual composition of the institutions (Black, White, Indian). Complaints have not been assigned on the basis of race or sex, but the presence of a mixed staff lends credibility to each individual staff member and thus to the total office. Indirect questions have arisen concerning the Black and Indian staff members pursuing complaints from Black and Indian inmates more diligently than any others. That question is openly discussed among the staff and the extent to which any staff member pursues any complaint depends entirely upon the nature of the complaint and the options open for solution. We recognize that we are often dealing with the individual's perception of what is happening whether it is in relation to the services of the Ombudsman or a complaint about the institution. We meet the individual where he is and proceed from there.

It is becoming increasingly evident that an additional staff member is necessary to assist in handling relationships with the legislature, refining internal procedures, research, and evaluation.

Relationship with the Legal Assistance to Minnesota Prisoners (LAMP)

The LAMP program was begun about the same time as the Ombudsman program with a Crime Commission grant to the University of Minnesota Law School. It is funded to provide legal services to the Minnesota State Prison, State Reformatory for Men, Minnesota Correctional Institute for Women, Minneapolis Workhouse, and Sandstone

Federal Correctional Institute. LAMP is limited to providing services in civil matters only.

The Ombudsman office has an informal agreement with LAMP that it will refer all legal matters of a noncriminal nature to them for service. During the time that they are serving the referral, the Ombudsman office will be kept informed in a mutually agreed upon way of the progress being made on the case. In addition, LAMP refers to the Ombudsman those matters it feels could be best resolved in a nonlegal fashion. LAMP also agreed to be available to the Ombudsman for periodic consultation on legal matters. The arrangement has been a beneficial one. It has allowed us to function as a middleman and funnel complaints of a legal nature to the professional assistance program.

Accomplishments of the Program

Technically, the population served by the Ombudsman program is all persons under the supervision of the Department of Corrections. This would include as of June 30, 1971, 486 youth in the various institutions and 772 under field supervision; for the adult institutions, 1,229 and 1,413 under field supervision. It is recognized that most of the people under the supervision of the Department of Corrections are not likely to request our services. The 380 complaints received from all sources represent less than 10 percent of the combined populations of the Department of Corrections and 22 percent of the institutionalized population.

In our efforts to reach the institutionalized population, a general distribution of materials describing the Ombudsman program was made to the eight institutions receiving the material were Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater, State Reformatory for Men at St. Cloud, Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women at Shakopee, State Training School for Boys at Red Wing, Minnesota Reception and Diagnostic Center at Lino Lakes, Minnesota Home School at Sauk Centre, Willow River Camp and Thistledeew Camp. The Community Services distribution was aimed at reaching people on parole.

The distribution of printed material was not sufficient to make the availability of the Ombudsman program fully known. All of the institutions were visited and the program was discussed with staff and residents. In the juvenile institutions, we were able to meet with the entire staff and resident population together. This was not possible at the adult institutions. There we had to meet with staff and inmates separately. At Stillwater, our initial concentration of effort was with

the social service staff and the inmate groups. We later held a meeting with the Associate Warden of Custody to discuss the Ombudsman program. We offered to meet with other members of the Custody staff at their convenience. To date, that meeting has not occurred in a group setting, but we have had individual meetings and discussions with a considerable number of the Custody officers.

In addition, the Ombudsman has discussed the program before three classes of the Corrections Academy. Included in those classes were correctional officers who were working or soon to be assigned to the various institutions. The discussions were lively and crucial questions about the service were raised. It was a valuable experience and the program was positively received.

Every effort is made to keep the lines of communication open between institutional staff and the Ombudsman office. More emphasis is placed on these open lines of communication at Stillwater than the other institutions because more problems develop there. It is the one institution that receives the greatest public attention. Approximately 63 percent of the complaints to the Ombudsman come from Stillwater, although it represents somewhat less than 40 percent of the institution population.

It was expected that Stillwater would generate the greatest activity and that the Ombudsman program would have to be geared to relate to its needs. If the program cannot relate successfully to the problems of Stillwater, then it will be of questionable value in the minds of the public.

During the first three months of the Ombudsman program, the overwhelming majority of the complaints were written and came through the mail. All but two of the complaints received during the first month of the program were written. The program and the staff that operates it are much better known now so that we are beginning to reach the least articulate population. This is especially the case now at Stillwater. Of the 198 complaints received from 10/1/72 to 12/31/72, 76 were pick-up (first contact was made during staff visit to the institution).

We recognized early that the success of the Ombudsman program would depend in great part on our ability to gain and maintain credibility with two diverse groups of people, the administration and staff of the Department of Corrections and the inmate population of the various institutions. The Ombudsman would have to convince the staff that a certain course of action would be in the best interest of all concerned even when they may be against it. The other difficult undertaking involved is getting an inmate, resident, or student, individually or collectively, to accept that the very best has been done and nothing more is forthcoming. The

complainant must feel that he is somewhat better off because of the Ombudsman intervention. To accomplish the aforementioned objectives, open lines of communications with all parties concerned will be required. The Ombudsman must be trusted by staff and client alike. We are constantly evaluating and reevaluating our relationships with client and staff. It has to be a continuous process for the program to remain successful.

Because the Ombudsman program was developed to relate to all of the institutions and individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections, some early decisions had to be made about how to best serve such a diverse operation. We recognized that the youth and adult institutions would present different problems that would require different approaches and solutions.

The adults were more complaint wise and better able to verbalize. Expecting written complaints may not be the best way to get at the problem. As it turned out, the youth were more verbal than had been anticipated and many of them did write their complaints. However, a significant number of complaints were initiated by institutional staff in behalf of the youth. Those staff-initiated complaints were primarily concerned with the decisions of the Youth Conservation Commission.

The resources available for resolving youth complaints are often limited. The institutional approach to the problem is often a paternalistic "father knows best" attitude which can impede progress toward a solution. Legal services are more readily available to the adult with legal problems than to the youth with similar needs. In civil matters, we are able to make use of the LAMP program for adults and the Public Defender may get involved in criminal cases. Such services are not equally available to youth. The Ombudsman frequently becomes his only resource. Considerably more time may be required in developing solutions to youth complaints because of staff attitude and limited staff resources.

Handling Complaints

In selecting problems to be investigated, the Ombudsman addresses himself particularly to actions which might be

- contrary to law or regulation;
- unreasonable, unfair, oppressive, or inconsistent with the general course of the administrative agency's judgments;
- mistaken in law or arbitrary in ascertainment of facts;
- improper in motivation or based on irrelevant considerations;

- unclear or inadequately explained when reasons should have been revealed;
- inefficiently performed.

The procedures for handling complaints and record keeping have been kept as simple as possible. Flexibility was of some concern because the program is new and there needs to be an opportunity for some of the procedures to evolve out of experience.

When a complaint is received in the office, it is assigned to a staff member, or on some occasions, it may be retained by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is less involved now in the investigation of individual complaints than he was during the first two months when staff consisted of two people. Once assigned, the staff person assumes the full responsibility for investigating the complaint. If it can be resolved through a discussion with the complainant and officials at the institution or elsewhere, the Ombudsman need not become formally involved. The Ombudsman, through regularly scheduled staff conferences and consultations, is kept informed on the investigations. If the investigation requires a written recommendation to the institution or the Department of Corrections, that recommendation goes out over the signature of the Ombudsman. The Superintendent, Warden, or official of the Department of Corrections is aware of specific complaints only to the extent that he may be a party of the resolution of that complaint. Some complaints may not involve the institution or the Department of Corrections at all. When this is the case, the communication is between the Ombudsman office and the complainant. This approach seems to have worked reasonably well, and it aids in establishing confidentiality. We have had some questions raised from one institution when they received the monthly case activity statistics from the Ombudsman office. The statistics showed that there were more complaints than the institution had suspected.

Types and Quantity of Complaints

During the first six months, the Ombudsman office handled 380 complaints which represents 321 unduplicated cases. Table 1 portrays the complaints by type and institution. Table 2 shows the frequency of complaints by month. Stillwater has the largest number with 216 complaints. The largest problem area is that of Policy matters (embodied in the Policy complaints are disciplinary actions taken against an individual that he feels to be unfair). Parole, Legal problems, Medical Treatment, and Staff problems are also large categories of complaints. See Tables 1 and 2.

Since the first quarterly report, our experience has lead us to add two categories. These categories are Property and Threats. Property complaints include a group

complaint representing 125 people who claim to have lost property in the mid-November shakedown at Stillwater. The Threat category represents those persons who have complained to the Ombudsman that their lives have been threatened. In the case of a threat, we bring this to the immediate attention of the institution. If they feel that the threat is serious, they may place the person in isolation for his own protection, transfer the person to a different cell block or to another institution. Complaints concerning Parole have been investigated to ascertain the fairness of the hearing and whether reasons were given for denial of parole. The Ombudsman does not make recommendations concerning the granting or denial of Parole, but he does assist inmates in determining and understanding the reasons for Parole denial.

Questions may be raised around the existence and application of standards. A representative from the Ombudsman office frequently sits in on Adult Corrections Commission (Parole Board) and Youth Conservation Commission (Parole Board for Youth) hearings. Generally when this is done, it has been upon the request of the client (complainant). It is difficult to assess a cause and effect relationship, but we have found it most beneficial to sit in as an observer during the Adult Corrections Commission and Youth Conservation Commission proceedings. If we are present during the hearing, we are in a much better position to deal with the questions concerning the fairness of the proceedings. This enhances our communication with both client and the Youth Conservation Commission and enables us to do a better job of interpreting what happened.

Highlights of Typical Complaints

When the program was initiated, it was expected that there would be superfluous complaints of the program on the part of complainants; there very well may have been testing to some degree. However, our experience to date indicates that practically all of the complaints received from all sources have been of real substance.

The Ombudsman's office has not always been in a position to handle every complaint. In those cases, referrals were made where there were other resources available. For instance, we have had a few requests for specific assistance in securing release on Parole. Those requests were rejected and the process for securing release on Parole was outlined to the individuals. Some of the complaints may have come to the Ombudsman prematurely, but even they represented real problems for the individuals. We have not had to dismiss any complaints on the basis of their being groundless. We have found in some instances after investigation that the evidence did not support the complaint's claim.

The Ombudsman has undertaken some group complaints and of his own initiative has recommended some changes in institutional and departmental policies, practices, and procedures.

Several of the inmate activity groups asked the Ombudsman's office for assistance in having rules changed that restricted outside participation in some of their group activities. The Ombudsman met with these groups and the Warden to discuss lifting such restrictions. In one instance, we met with partial success. The group in question was allowed to have a small increase in the number of outside participants in its activities. Since that time, there has been an across-the-board change in institutional policies at Stillwater affecting the functioning of inmate groups. The effects of the across-the-board changes are being observed and the Ombudsman's office is open to work with the inmate groups and the staff of the institutions to modify some of these changes.

The Ombudsman probably had his first test in a crisis situation on October 31, 1972, when several inmates in the segregation section of Stillwater held a Guard hostage and threatened bodily harm if certain changes did not take place. There were three inmates who were providing the principal leadership. Two of the inmates were known to the Ombudsman. The inmates, Warden, and Commissioner of Corrections requested the Ombudsman's presence to assist with resolving the situation.

The Guard was released after four hours of discussion involving the inmates, Ombudsman and Commissioner of Corrections. The fact that the Ombudsman had had some prior contact with two of the men was of value in the negotiations. The Ombudsman's contact with the men continues because the issue of extended confinement in segregation for these men has not been finally resolved.

Another area of involvement at Stillwater for the Ombudsman has been in connection with the creation of an Inmate Advisory Council that is still in its infancy with its role still in the process of being defined. The Ombudsman office and LAMP supervised the election of inmate members to this Council and sit as ex-officio members.

In mid-November, there was a general lock-up at Stillwater and a search of all cells and inmates was conducted for contraband and weapons. One of the unfortunate by-products of that mission was the loss and/or destruction of personal property of some of the inmates. The Ombudsman office and LAMP are working with the Prison and the Department of Corrections officials to reimburse those inmates who can substantiate a loss of property. As a result, the Ombudsman's office received the 125 complaints about lost or destroyed property mentioned earlier in this report.

The Ombudsman presence on other occasions involving two separate incidents may have avoided a crisis. The first involved an inmate confined in segregation awaiting to be charged for assault and sodomy. He refused to submit to a Court Order which required that he give a saliva sample to be tested for results to be given to the Grand Jury. The inmate had emphatically stated that the sample would have to be secured by force. This would have necessitated as many as six or more men (officers) entering the cell and forcibly securing the sample. There were many negative ramifications that could have resulted from such action. After much discussion between the inmate, the Ombudsman and a member of the Inmate Advisory Council, the sample was secured by the Ombudsman for the officer of the Court. The Ombudsman advised that the inmate give the sample under protest in case the validity of the warrant becomes an issue in Court during his trial. The second incident involved an inmate who was locked in his cell after striking an officer and was refusing to come out. The Ombudsman was able to assist several other inmates and officers, one of whom was a member of the Inmate Advisory Council, to persuade the man to vacate his cell without the use of force.

A high incidence of Medical complaints have been received which may be partially attributed to the lack of medical staff and inadequate facilities. Another significant aspect is that the environment itself is a strong contributor to Medical complaints. Problems that one would not consider serious on the outside become major from the inmate's point of view. In the general community, he would probably deal with many of his medical needs through the use of home remedies. Another contributing factor is the individual's perception of his problem and what is being done to resolve it. By and large, he has to go through a third party, such as a Guard or Caseworker, to get his medical situation brought to the attention of someone who can deal with it. If there is a breakdown at the third party level, problems can result that may cause a complaint to be filed with the Ombudsman. Some of these complaints have been resolved by dealing with the third party, assuring that the necessary information gets to the medical staff so that a medical decision can be made. In other cases, it may involve having the medical person, usually the physician, give a careful and understandable explanation directly to the inmate.

A significant number of the complaints in the various categories seem to result from a breakdown in communication between the staff and population and among the staff itself.

The Ombudsman office has had to put forth special effort not to overly involve itself in the day to day staff functions of the institutions. From time to time, we have found ourselves performing what we would consider staff functions. When

When this has occurred, a notation was made, and it was pointed out to the institution that we felt that their staff should have handled the problem and not the Ombudsman. Wherever possible, we have attempted to get the complainant to make use of existing institutional channels to resolve his complaint. The Ombudsman steps in at the point that the system either breaks down or does not exist.

A concerted effort has not yet been made to solicit staff complaints. We do recognize a need to move more in that direction, but it must be done with caution. Consideration will have to be given to the relationships that staff has with administration, union and civil service. We have received some indication from the staff at Stillwater and one of the juvenile institutions that they would be interested in having the Ombudsman assist them in developing solutions to some of their problems. To date, there have been three staff complaints, two individual and one group. The group complaint was from the Caseworker staff at Stillwater and it was given in a meeting with the Ombudsman. The complaint related to the inability of Caseworker staff to function adequately due to shortage of staff and seemingly "unnecessary administrative policies and procedures".

The overriding question and concern still seems to be to what extent can the Ombudsman provide services to both staff and inmates without developing conflicting goals. Our position is that the services can be compatible and complimentary, but this will require careful implementation with constant review and evaluation.

Summary and Projection

It is still early to make any kind of definitive statements about how successful the Ombudsman's office has been. One can say that the program is generally known throughout the Department of Corrections and the institutions. The service has been used as had been expected.

We have had expressions, orally and in writing, from persons using the services that it has been beneficial in helping to resolve complaints.

The staff at the various institutions have been cooperative and good working relationships exist. There are still some problems that must be worked out between the staff at the institutions, particularly Stillwater, and the Ombudsman's office. Those problems are about what was expected.

The Ombudsman office continues to function with a low profile. Occasionally there has been some disagreement between the Ombudsman and Stillwater and the Department

of Corrections officials as to how low that profile should be. It is generally agreed that care must be taken in the sharing of information with the public. This by no means is intended to curtail the public right to know. However, if not done with extreme care, appeals to the public that may be intended to generate care and understanding could be counter productive.

Special efforts are being undertaken to be of greater service to the Community Services Division (parolees, etc.) of the Department. A few complaints from parolees have been received. Because the Community Service operation is state-wide, it will present a greater problem than the institutions--most of which are within the Twin Cities Metro area.

There has been a tremendous show of national interest in the Minnesota Ombudsman program. Inquiries and visits have come from all over the country. The national press has written about the program and CBS television has shown some interest in doing a documentary news program. The inquiries have come from corrections officials, legislators and educators.

There is good evidence to point toward the Ombudsman program making a positive and constructive contribution to corrections. The Commissioner of Corrections has indicated that his mail from inmates at Stillwater has declined by more than 80 percent. The letters of complaint from prisoners to the Governor have slowed to a trickle. Most of those letters are referred to us for investigation. Since the initial batch of letters that were forwarded during the first month of the program, less than one per month has been forwarded.

A proposal has been submitted to the Minnesota State Legislature calling for the formal creation of an Office of Ombudsman for Corrections.

TABLE 1

OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS: JULY - DECEMBER 1972

Institutions

	Placement	Racial Discrim.	Policy	Staff	Program	Legal	Medical	Property	Parole	Threats	Other	Totals
MSP	2	7	52	17	10	33	31	9	39	4	12	216
SRM	0	6	17	6	3	10	4	0	12	5	3	66
MCIW	0	0	9	7	2	5	0	0	8	0	0	31
MRDC	14	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	4	0	2	28
MHS	3	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	11
STSB	0	0	5	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	11
WRC	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
TC	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
FS	3	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	10
Totals	22	18	90	38	17	52	37	10	65	10	21	380

MSP-Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater; SRM-State Reformatory for Men at St. Cloud; MCIW-Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women at Shakopee; MRDC-Minnesota Reception & Diagnostic Center at Lino Lakes; MHS-Minnesota Home School at Sauk Centre; STSB-Minnesota Training School for Boys at Red Wing; WRC-Willow River Camp; TC-Thistledew Camp; FS-Field Services

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FROM ALL SOURCES

TABLE 2

