

Inquiry into Prisoners and their Families

*PEP, AN INDEPENDENT research organisation, has received a combined grant of £12,000 from two private Trusts for the purpose of carrying out a three-year study of the needs and problems of the families of men in prison. At present there is little systematic knowledge about such families. The inquiry will review the economic, social and psychological factors affecting them and will evaluate the ways in which their needs are at present met and the implications for future policy in regard to the welfare of prisoners' families, particularly during the period of separation.

As far as possible regional differences will be taken into account by the selection of a balanced sample of families from all parts of the country. The men themselves will be interviewed as well as their dependents in order to gain a picture of the complete

family unit during imprisonment. It is intended to pay particular attention to the question of hire purchase commitments, since the number of people in prison for debt continues to rise sharply.

The work is being carried out with the co-operation of the Prison Commission and the Home Office with Mrs. Pauline Morris as the Senior Research Officer.

PEP has carried out many previous inquiries into social problems. "Family Needs and the Social Services" was published in April last and a major current inquiry is concerned with the Community Mental Health Services. This new study is, however, the first PEP project in the field of crime and delinquency. The present programme of PEP also includes a study of the trade unions in a changing society and a major project concerned with the European Common Market.

*Political & Economic Planning