

Mr. WHITENER. May I interrupt a moment. Isn't it true, also, Judge, that within the last 10 years the time that is required now in the criminal court to take a plea of guilty is probably three times as long as it was three years ago?

Judge GREENE. Well, Mr. Chairman, all of the procedures are substantially more time consuming. Motions more time, pleas take more time, trials take more time, plus the fact, as I indicated, that proportionately the numbers of trials that we have as against the numbers of pleas has increased almost astronomically.

Mr. WHITENER. Well, when I was a prosecutor I asked the prisoner if he pleaded guilty. If he said yes, you went out in the courtroom and let him plead guilty. Now the judges in my state have a great long sheet of paper and he stands up, and the judge asks him how old he is, how much income his mother has, how much his father has, how many children—all of this before they ever let him say whether he is guilty or not. The lawyers, and the judges tell me that it is just impossible now to take a plea of guilty and move proceedings expeditiously.

Excuse me for interrupting you, Mr. Steiger.

Mr. STEIGER. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Judge, do you concur, however, with the need for additional judges in General Sessions or the District Court and General Sessions who are faced with the backlog of 1,500 or whatever it is?

Judge GREENE. Yes, indeed, Congressman Steiger. I believe, and I have made some pretty careful calculations on this, that the court could really cope with its present criminal and civil case load and do something about reducing the backlog only if we were given five additional judges.

Now, I know this coming year, in asking for additional judges is not always the answer. I am not really grabbing the figure five out of the air. I have studied the numbers of cases that we have. I have had computations made as to how long an average case takes to try; and on the basis of this computation I have concluded that if we have 26 judges instead of 21 we would be able to cope with the present criminal case load and the present civil case load, and at the same time reduce the back log in both our criminal and civil jury cases so that they are in manageable proportions.

Mr. STEIGER. I respect your judgment. Put yourself in the committee's position for a moment. We are faced with the possibility of having to choose between the economic factor of approving the five new judges or approving the five new courts and/or raising the existing salaries and retirement of the present courts with our goal not to fix justice as important as it is the efficiency of the judicial process in the District. If you were to have to make a decision as to whether you get five new courts—now, I am not being facetious about it, either—which is of greater value to the judicial process of the District—the welfare of the sitting judges or the five new courts?

Judge GREENE. Well, Congressman Steiger, let me say this. I don't really think that choice must be made. In the first place, to attract the capable, well-qualified judges is important, and I think the salaries that are paid and the retirement structure that is available to have does have some significance in relation to that.