

before the court and pleaded guilty to the murder of two persons. Why? Because he wanted to go back to the penitentiary that night and not be kept in the jail in Montreal. That was the only way he could get out. He knew this some time beforehand.

The Solicitor General spoke about security and lines of communication. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) laughed when the minister said that. There are all kinds of lines of communications. Many of them are outside the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General. I have probably received more mail from prisoners, through unofficial channels, than through official channels. I am sure the hon. member for Yukon, who has been interested in this field and has had some experience with inmates, has also received more communications through informal rather than formal channels. I am sure this is also true of other members.

Let us look at the case of the criminal whom the previous speaker wanted to mention. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, when the riot took place in St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary. The leader of that riot appeared before a judge who is now a member of this House, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), who gave him a sentence of one day, when other people were receiving sentences of 14 years, because this involved damage to public property. In this case the judge knew the man had been badly beaten. This man was one of the most dangerous criminals. However, he has now been out of jail for a number of years. He is a businessman and employs 25 people today. You will not see him in prison again.

Another person involved in the same riot and who received a sentence of 14 years is out now operating an organization in Hull for the benefit of other ex-prisoners. He has helped 900 ex-convicts over the last four or five years. Surely society's responsibility is to get these people back into society. They have done something in opposition to society, and if they can be rehabilitated the effort should be made to rehabilitate them.

I think, however, that when arrangements can be made such as those made in respect of Coco Mercier we had better look at the question of morale in the penitentiary service. I suggest that the morale must be pretty bad in most of these institutions. Nothing is done about the guards who beat prisoners. There have been occasions when guards have formed a line through which the prisoners must pass. I was there the day after one such occasion and saw the bruises. The prisoners were beaten as they walked down the line. The solicitor general of the day covered it up. This practice should not be covered up; it should be dealt with, because all the guards in that institution who believed they could assist in rehabilitating prisoners in the institution obviously knew they would not be able to do so when the solicitor general of the day was willing to cover up the situation, as were most other people.

I understand we are to pass this resolution. This means that a committee will be established to investigate the penitentiary service in Canada. This committee which is to be established is not to have the right to travel. I warn the Solicitor General that it may be difficult to bring to Ottawa as witnesses all the people concerned from Stoney Mountain, Dorchester or from any of the penitentiaries in

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the Montreal or Kingston areas. It seems to me it would be wise to have the committee travel rather than to have witnesses travel to Ottawa. It seems to me that this has been an ill-thought out way of trying to resolve the major problems in the penitentiary service.

If we should reach the stage of agreeing with the previous member—and I have listened to him making the same speech for many years—then we will have reached the point where the only solution will be for the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé) to build more penitentiaries to contain these people. I suggest, however, that that is not what the ordinary Canadian wants. I think the ordinary Canadian wishes us to embark upon a modern form of penology so that we rehabilitate into society as many people as possible in the shortest possible time.

The building of penitentiaries such as the maximum security one we have established in Montreal is a disgrace to an enlightened society. It goes back to the dungeon days. I do not believe it accomplishes anything. If I should lock up my dog, who is very quiet, for two or three weeks, he may even bite me, let alone everybody else afterwards. That is exactly what happens in respect of many of these prisoners. That most dangerous man in Canada, Coco Mercier, because of the action of a member of this House in another office has turned out to be a good citizen and in my opinion will never return to any of our institutions. This is a credit to the man who had compassion and provided justice in that instance. This is the type of case I have seen many, many times since I have been interested in this field.

I plead with the minister to give consideration to this question. Mr. Fulton, who was minister of justice at that time, said it was a British right for any Member of Parliament, at any reasonable hour, to visit any penitentiary. The previous solicitor general believed we did not have that right. I suggest to the minister that he can help himself and the department if, when these complaints are made, Members of Parliament have an opportunity to look into some of them. It may be a way of permitting prisoners to let off steam.

I hope the committee will take another look at the type of investigation it is to undertake. I plead with the members of the committee and everybody else not to merely criticize penal reform and the mistakes which have been made, and not to let the news media draw attention only to those things which are bad in our penal system, but to give credit to some of the things which are good and which are of benefit to society.

**Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton):** Mr. Speaker, originally it was not my intention to participate in this debate. Frankly, I am not in favour of the motion, but I believe it will be adopted and so be it. I think the tack taken by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) is the right one. That is the position I wish to support. I think the Solicitor General has set out well what is in fact the policy of the government, of his department and of the penitentiary service.

I was very disturbed—I am not sure whether I was angry or sad—to hear the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) tell us about the 650 names on a petition. He quoted the comments made by a warden of a