

I think if the formula is understood by the hon. member he will realize it allows that group to get the relief they are seeking.

PENITENTIARIES—MAXIMUM SECURITY PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS—STATUS OF INSTITUTION PROPOSED FOR DARTMOUTH

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. parliamentary secretary remaining in the House this evening and taking time from being with his family in order to respond on behalf of the minister.

My question is a fairly straightforward one which I raised on behalf of residents who, if present plans go ahead, will find themselves living in proximity to a maximum security psychiatric institution.

I raised this matter to ascertain what the status of the planning and consultation is with the province of Nova Scotia and the city of Dartmouth. When the matter came to light a couple of years ago it was understood there would be full consultation. It has become apparent in recent days that planning for the institution has advanced in a number of significant ways and without consultation with officials of the city of Dartmouth—unless our distinguished mayor has failed to take into her confidence the aldermen for the ward concerned.

There is no question of the need for updated and secure care and treatment facilities for—and I have consulted a dictionary with respect to the correct phrase and it is expressive—the criminally insane or those who have been committed by the courts for a variety of disabilities.

It was my understanding at the outset of discussions about the location of such an institution—and there is no doubt that it is required—that it would be located in close physical proximity to the existing Nova Scotia hospital structure. I was led to believe it would not be necessary to go outdoors or use transportation to remove people who required psychiatric care from the hospital to the new institution. In other words, it was understood that a tunnel or hallway, or some other means, would be used which would combine the requirements of a maximum security psychiatric institution and those of the federal penitentiary service. It is now my understanding that the institution is to be located about three quarters of a mile away from the Nova Scotia hospital. The hospital has, of course, for many years housed people convicted by the courts who required psychiatric or psychological care and confinement. Now we have the spectre of the new institution being at some distance from the Nova Scotia hospital, which incidentally is one of the best in eastern Canada. This raises the question of security in the transportation of patients.

The questions I want answered this evening, Mr. Speaker, are these: Has the province been consulted? I assume the answer is yes, because the land is provincial. Has Dartmouth been consulted; if so, to what extent? What assurances will be given with respect to the security of the residents of the area? The proposed plan indicates that there are to be residential properties on at least three sides of the proposed maximum security institution.

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What security is involved in the transportation of prisoners from the maximum security institution to the Nova Scotia hospital, for care and treatment? Is it contemplated that existing facilities of that institution will be used to treat inmates of the maximum security institution? Will this mean an additional burden, in terms of beds and patients, for the Nova Scotia hospital?

What plans does the government have to advise and consult with the residents directly affected? In other words, what is the status of the consultations and planning? It is important to know as some plans have, sort of, been leaked to the public. It is essential to know what consultation has taken place so that the fears of the residents can properly be answered. The answers to such questions can allay the fears of the residents of the area. Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's attending in the House this evening.

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) has raised a matter which is of great concern to himself and to residents of the area he represents. The matter comes under the Department of the Solicitor General and it is the policy of the department to consult both with provincial and municipal officials. I hope that I can assure the hon. member that the province has been consulted.

If the hon. member were in my position he would see why, up to this point, there has not been complete consultation with Dartmouth, nor at this time consultation with the residents. Consultation with the municipality and the people will take place, if that is the wish of all parties, before any site is chosen for the new penal institution. In fact, in many cases penitentiary officials engage in public meetings in order to explain to local groups of citizens the plans which the penitentiary service is considering for their area.

This co-operation between federal and provincial officials is evident in all facets of correctional services. For example, in some areas, including Nova Scotia, federal officials use provincial jails to house some of their inmates. This is done in cases where it is beneficial to move the inmate and at the same time represent no threat to public safety.

With respect to plans for regional psychiatric centres, may I state the following: the Canadian Penitentiary Service plans to provide for the operation of a regional psychiatric centre in each of its five regions of Canada, namely, Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, prairies, and Pacific. One centre is now in full operation at Abbotsford, British Columbia, for the Pacific region. One centre is now under construction in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, for the prairie region. Approval in principle has been obtained from the Treasury Board for the construction of three more such centres, two of which are planned to replace the obsolete physical facilities now in use in Kingston, Ontario, and in Laval, Quebec, and the third to be constructed in the general area of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, to serve the Atlantic region.

Since early 1975, various meetings were held in the Atlantic provinces between the federal and provincial governments concerned. As a result it was agreed that a