

Three gentlemen in responsible positions, take the course, somewhat unusual in polite circles, of watching Mrs. Cooper so closely that they notice her refusal of a piece of cake from Mrs. Trollope. Into this action, they read repulsion by Mrs. Cooper of Mrs. Trollope's friendly advances, and gravely comment upon this after leaving the house.

I omit a paragraph.

I regret to have to state unpleasant facts, but it is the only way to clear up a situation the unpleasantness of which did not originate with me or mine. Gossip is by no means confined to this Penitentiary, it apparently touches every official of other Departments who visits here, as shown by records, and the repetition of a jesting remark by another Warden was once the cause of a public call down at a Convention. Even the head of the Branch is not left in peace as a person at an eastern institution claims to be able to repeat at first hand derogatory remarks made by him concerning the wife of an Inspector. If the Superintendent is made the subject of gossip, I suppose a Warden cannot expect to be exempted.

Referring to your remark that this is the first case of the kind known, may I, in no unkind spirit, but simply as a statement of fact, point out that this is the first case where subordinates and their wives have personal relationships and friendships with the Superintendent.

No Warden can give efficient service when his support by his superior is called into question. To permit criticism of him in drawing rooms or there discuss Penitentiary matters, strikes at the very root of the Warden's authority, and removes from him the calm confidence necessary to handle his staff and establish an esprit de corps.

I sincerely trust that out of this regrettable discussion some good will accrue. Shall we accept your public declaration: "I hate a tittle-tattle; I have no use for a tale bearer; if there is anything wrong, go to your Warden like a man." Let this spirit be enforced uniformly, letters making charges against officials—Wardens or anyone else—be referred to the person accused, and while it is known that every complaint will be investigated, the person complaining will be held responsible for its accuracy and freedom from malice. If this is done and inspecting parties will refrain from visiting subordinates and their wives or establishing personal relationships with them the path of a Warden will be smooth indeed and the main obstacle to the efficient conduct of public affairs removed.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) H. W. Cooper.

General W. St. Pierre Hughes, D.S.O.,  
Ottawa.

My information is that this was the last correspondence on the subject, the last open chapter in the difference of opinion between the Superintendent and the Warden. The Superintendent got busy at Ottawa. This last letter was written at the end of October, and late in December he secured an order from the Minister for a special inquiry into

affairs at New Westminster, notwithstanding that it was only in September that a regular thorough inquiry had been made and the institution found to be correct in every particular. There had been no escapes; there had been no riots; there had been nothing public—nothing except this correspondence about a five o'clock tea, between the parties in the meantime. Yet the Superintendent secured a special inquiry into the institution—as I see it, a vendetta, directed to an officer of the Department of Justice, to go out to British Columbia and "get" this warden. I use "get" in the sense in which it is used by inmates of the penitentiary.

My information is that when the inquisitor arrived there he made no general attempt to inquire into affairs of the institution, but instead of that he sought out every employee there whom Cooper had disciplined during his whole five years, and even in those cases had to use threats and intimidation to induce them to say what they did, and even this evidence was permitted to be taken down only to a limited extent by the shorthand writer whom he brought with him.

I am informed that any matters that those unwilling witnesses mentioned that did not reflect upon the warden were excluded from the evidence. That is part of the inquiry which I wish to have—whether anyone has presumed to present to the Minister evidence procured under such conditions. I am informed that in some cases the information that was given was obtained by threats and intimidation, and particularly by reading to those officers the section from the Penitentiary Act giving to any officer appointed by the Minister to hold special inquiry, the right to commit to the common jail for fourteen days any person not properly answering his questions. I am told that this was on the lips of this inquisitor with every witness he examined, and not only with ordinary witnesses, but that with the warden—his superior in rank in the service—that he was just as truculent as he could have been with the newest guard, and that over and over again he threatened the warden with commitment to the common jail for fourteen days because the warden wished to amplify his answers to this junior Inspector from the Justice Department.

To me these things are unspeakable, that any officer should be allowed to go through the country in that truculent manner, browbeating and tyrannizing over men entitled to the respect of their associates as well as of the general public. However, that was what happened in December. When this inquisitor