

Penitentiaries

ing. Commitment to the job was felt strongly by 70 per cent of those surveyed, and almost three-quarters of the respondents, or 72 per cent, perceived their function as a career.

The CSC has also developed and implemented a CSC awards program for staff, including the Commissioner's Citation for Bravery and Meritorious Service, the Service Commendation, the Certificate of Appreciation and the Long Service Awards.

For these reasons, as well as those expressed by my colleagues, I feel that the Solicitor General, through the Correctional Service of Canada, is fulfilling his mandate and is meeting the objectives of the motion presented by the Hon. Member for Oxford as well as the recommendations of the subcommittee on the penitentiary system in Canada.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I will say that we were all very pleased to have the opportunity to work in this committee and to deal with this most urgent and serious question at that time back in the late 1970s when we had very serious riots in the major institutions, the maximum security institutions in Canada. We were delighted with the reception which the recommendations in the report received and the fact that the Solicitor General of the day, and subsequent Solicitors General, have taken the recommendations very seriously. The majority of those recommendations have been implemented, acted upon or studied. Some action has been taken. I believe it is very gratifying to know that our work has not been in vain but indeed has made a substantial contribution to our society.

For all those stated reasons, once again I want to congratulate the Hon. Member for Oxford for his diligence in bringing this matter to our attention.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my intervention with respect to this motion will be very brief since I do not want to talk it out. I want to give the Government the opportunity of allowing it to be sent to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. I agree with the basic trend of the motion. I also appreciate the fact that it is in line with the recommendations made in the 1977 report.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that in my constituency there are two federal institutions, one maximum and one minimum. They are probably two of the best run institutions in Canada. Part of the reason they have gained that reputation is that, to a great extent, they have opened up their operations to the public. I believe what the Hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday) was attempting to do was to suggest that this kind of openness is necessary, particularly in those areas from which we isolate ourselves easily.

That is particularly true in the area of the correctional service. Most of us tend to isolate or to separate ourselves from the whole approach to correctional institutions and say it is the responsibility of someone else. However, living in the community of Prince Albert, I know that the more open the organization is to public scrutiny, the better it is going to be.

Besides the advisory committee in Prince Albert, which operates very well and thoroughly in the community, the Prince Albert maximum institution has a large number of

volunteers who go in and work on a one-to-one basis with the inmates. The projection of those people into the prison community has made a considerable difference, when the inmates leave the institution, to their acceptance into the community, and has contributed to the continued and long-term rehabilitation of the prisoners coming out of those penitentiaries. This applies not necessarily only to the Prince Albert institution, but to institutions all across Canada. I feel, therefore, that what we need to do as a Parliament is to take a look at those recommendations from the 1977 report which were not acted upon, and most of which, if you look at them closely, deal with the whole area with which the Hon. Member for Oxford dealt. I believe if we were to open up and give to the public a better insight into why decisions are made and how the decisions are made, we would have better institutions, because, in large part, our attitude toward correctional institutions is caused by fear of the unknown. If we can eliminate that fear by increasing the knowledge of the public generally, we will have a more open situation. For example, if one looks at the statistics of the Prince Albert maximum security institution, one finds that there were more complaints by inmates in Prince Albert than in any other institution across Canada. The reason for that, I believe, is the openness which is encouraged. Rather than being a criticism of that institution, it is a praise of that institution, because it has allowed the inmates to feel free to come forward with their complaints and to have their complaints acted upon.

Therefore, I support the position of the Hon. Member for Oxford in his attempt to open up the institution for more insight by the public.

Mr. Al MacBain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the idea behind the motion brought forth by the Hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday) is one which has been in existence for a number of years. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Oxford was a member of the Subcommittee on the Penitentiary System in Canada. This motion stems, as he has stated to you, from recommendation No. 24 of the report of the subcommittee. However, in my mind, it contains one important addition. Recommendation No. 24, in itself, did not contain any reference to providing for increased public participation in policy-making by having the Commissioner of Corrections named by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of a five-member board. This statement, however, seems to be the basis of the motion of the Hon. Member. He obviously feels strongly that by having his motion passed, the public participation in the penitentiary system will greatly increase.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I have decided to examine and enumerate for you what the correctional service of Canada has accomplished to increase public involvement in policy-making, not only within institutions but also during the pre-release and parole periods of an inmate's incarceration. I hope to show you what the Hon. Member proposes will not serve to enhance public involvement.