

subsequently he decided to colour it a little bit and call it 54. Nevertheless, let us return to the article. It continues:

—and that 38 have less than two years left on their sentences. Twenty-one are serving minor sentences of less than five years.

The 38 criminals about whom the previous Solicitor General spoke will be released shortly in any event. Need I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that when a person has completed serving his sentence, it is quite normal for him to be released. We are not discussing whether or not people who have committed crimes and served their sentences will be released. That usually happens anyway.

I will say this slowly so that the Hon. Member over there will understand me. We are deciding whether or not there will be a temporary transitional period with some form of supervision for the transfer of an inmate from an institutionalized life to a life on his own.

Where does this leave us? It leaves us with the possibility that this is a strategy to deal with what I consider, with all due respect, to be a phoney issue. I would be the last to accuse the Tories of being incompetent, but if one analyses this matter very carefully, one comes to the conclusion that it could very well be that there is at least an ingredient of incompetence in the Tory Government. Let me elaborate on that.

First, let us go over the history of this Bill. We should start by saying that mandatory supervision has existed in this country and in most countries for a very long time. Mandatory supervision is not a weird scheme that was invented by a Government a year or two ago. It is something that has existed in one form or another for 100 years. Of course, we know that the Government is a little slow, but after 100 years, even it should understand.

After 100 years, the Tories decided on June 27, 1985, to introduce this Bill which they now call very urgent. Do you know when the Bill was introduced for second reading, Mr. Speaker? It was not on June 28 or the day after that. June 27, 1985, was almost eight months after the Government was elected. The Government presented this emergency legislation for second reading on September 12.

Just in case there is the odd person out there who thinks the Opposition delayed the Bill at second reading stage, let me say that second reading stage ended on September 23. Counting weekends, that was only 11 days, and other Bills may have been discussed at the same time. That is good co-operation on the part of the Opposition, and I congratulate my colleagues, the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) and the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), who are very good spokesmen on these issues, for dealing with the matter so expeditiously. I know that even Tory Members would want to do that.

This important and urgent legislation, as the Government now calls it, should have gone to committee on September 24 since debate ended on September 23. In the unfortunate event that there was a delay, it should have gone to committee on

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September 25. Do you know when it was referred to committee, Mr. Speaker? It was referred to committee after Christmas. The last committee meeting was held on January 23, 1986. That is the speed with which the Government deals with emergency legislation.

The committee tabled its report on January 29. Of course the committee wanted to be co-operative as well. Do you know when the Government called back the report for concurrence in the House, Mr. Speaker? It was on June 17. Is that the way to deal with emergency legislation?

[*Translation*]

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves how sincere this Conservative Government is when it takes such an unconscionable amount of time to deal with legislation it has now qualified as urgent.

The debate on third reading of the Bill in question started in the House on June 18, 1986 and ended on June 26. Some Conservatives are accusing the other Chamber of dragging its feet. Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. The Bill was presented in the other Chamber on June 27. Debate on second reading of the Bill started on July 2 and ended the same day. The third reading stage in the other Chamber also took place on July 2. How can the Government accuse others of wasting time when it has taken this Government nearly two years to get around to dealing with the issue through the normal process in the House of Commons?

[*English*]

I am sure I have convinced you, Mr. Speaker, and the majority of Canadians that indeed this is not a situation of the Opposition, the Senate or anyone else committing a mistake or lacking in respect for the authority of the one across the way who thinks he is almighty, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). It is either total incompetence or part strategy; maybe it is both combined, maybe it is strategic incompetence.

● (1720)

In conclusion, I should like to refer to a report of May 14, 1986 which was made in the other House. I will not quote it verbatim because I know we are not supposed to do that in this Chamber, but in the opinion of the committee, legislation should reflect the principle in Bill S-32 that the courts rather than the Parole Board should make decisions respecting continued incarceration of inmates. Conservative and Liberal Members of the Senate unanimously indicated that they wanted the courts rather than the Parole Board to revoke the privileges of inmates who were to be released into society.

As the Hon. Member for York Centre and the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) indicated so eloquently in the House earlier today, this Party is not saying that there are no cases in which prisoners should remain incarcerated for their full terms. As a matter of fact, the previous Liberal Government wanted to amend the law. What we are saying in the House today is that we should not deny anyone the privilege of appealing to the courts. What are they there for,