

*Penitentiaries*

the hon. member for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes (Mr. Fox), tabled his response. At that time there was an extreme amount of ambiguity concerning that response. He indicated he accepted 53 of the 65 recommendations and reserved decision on six. That unfortunately caused a lot of confusion. He quickly clarified the situation, and by so doing indicated his willingness to co-operate with the committee.

On November 29 of last year the then solicitor general tabled the first progress report. The subcommittee then conducted an in-depth analysis of this report, and during the month of December held a number of in camera sessions with officials of the department and with the task force charged with the implementation of our report.

What are the recommendations that have been accepted? There has been clear acceptance of the principle of equal employment opportunities for both men and women. The department has appointed a co-ordinator of equal opportunities for women programs within the Canadian penitentiary system. Secondly, contact visiting will, over a period of time, as facilities become available, be introduced in the maximum institutions of Archambault, Fort Saskatchewan and even Millhaven. At the present moment contact visiting occurs mostly in our minimum institutions.

The one issue in respect of which I think all of us expressed a high degree of unanimity was the issue of no deals for hostage takers. The government has clearly indicated its support for that recommendation by its actions with regard to the incident which occurred at Millhaven on November 21 of last year.

The department has also established independent chairpersons for disciplinary hearings within institutions. The department has presented a very illustrative list of persons chosen to sit as these chairpersons. It is also in the process of implementing recommendation 36 regarding the grievance procedure where you have a panel of two inmates, two representatives from the staff of the institution, chaired hopefully by an outside person. This system is presently being used in some of the more troublesome institutions like Attica. Members of the subcommittee will remember that well from the film we saw of what happened there. This is a pilot project which is now being undertaken at the Saskatchewan penitentiary. Hopefully when the inherent difficulties of that procedure are worked out it will be implemented on a nationwide basis.

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When the report of the subcommittee was tabled, the then solicitor general and the department rejected our recommendation that all directors of institutions report directly to the commissioner. Subsequent to that, in December during the in camera hearings we learned that directors of maximum institutions now will report to the commissioner. This goes a long way toward meeting our first recommendation, which was originally rejected by the then solicitor general. This clearly indicates the government is forthcoming. Also it demonstrates the dedication of the former solicitor general, the hon. member for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes, and I congratulate him for

implementing many of our recommendations. An entire system cannot be changed overnight. I am confident the new Solicitor General will be as forthcoming as his predecessor.

Many participants in the debate today have referred to the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan). I applaud him as well. He did an excellent job. In an address before the national association active in criminal justice on January 27, 1978, he said the following:

I have gone into a good deal of detail with respect to progress on the subcommittee report because the process of progressive adoption of a report which here appears is almost unprecedented in government. Normally, a government, wishing to put its best foot forward, will announce at the outset the maximum possible implementation of a report, and any subsequent changes in the government attitude are likely to be by way of diminution of the original impetus and undertakings.

The process in this case has been the exact reverse. Although the impact of the subcommittee's report on the press and public was immediate and strong, the hardened professionals in the Canadian Penitentiary Service approached it rather gingerly, and the minister, even though from the outset filled with good will toward the report, was limited by the attitudes of his subordinates. But since the minister's initial response in August, there has been a steady groundswell of support in the CPS in favour of the recommendations. Things which seemed impossible then now seem possible. What then appeared merely possible now appears probable. The change in attitude of middle and senior management in the CPS was most strikingly evident to members of the standing committee during the in-camera hearings in December. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that it is now possible to foresee an almost total acceptance of the report by the government.

However, the major recommendations which called for taking the Canadian Penitentiaries Service out of the general rules, guidelines and legislation of most government departments is still under study. I urge strongly the new Solicitor General to accept these recommendations unequivocally. To do otherwise invites the continuation of the problems which resulted in the creation of our subcommittee, and the continuation of the kinds of events which occurred recently at the Dorchester penitentiary, in British Columbia, and at Archambault. Members of the committee are fully cognizant of the fact that the Solicitor General cannot guarantee the removal of all hostilities, but they should be minimized as much as possible.

Not only do these major changes have far-reaching implications in the Canadian Penitentiaries Service, but they have far-reaching implications for the government in general. We are dealing with a very unique situation in the Canadian Penitentiaries Service. It is very dangerous to decentralize just for the sake of regionalization. If the departments in Ottawa are duplicated in the various regions, then those departments are not sure if they have line or staff authority.

The committee looked at staff ratios. It was a one-for-one ratio. That indicates a lot of people are working, but are they effective and efficient? There is an extreme amount of confusion within the system. A lot of it is internal, and a lot has been overcome. Much of the confusion is caused by the fact that one must deal with government departments and the Public Service Commission.

I should like to refer to an incident which occurred at the airport here in Ottawa. Some guards were to pick up prisoners, and those guards were drunk. The RCMP officers who were