

*Penitentiaries*

the administration and the staff generally; secondly, from that of the inmate; and finally, and very importantly, from that of the community—that is, from society as a whole.

With regard to the administration and staff, I think some of the following questions should be asked. Is there a need to streamline the whole prison administration? How good are communications between different levels of the penitentiary service? Are new programs which are being implemented properly explained to those who are going to be responsible for their implementation? Is the needed staff infrastructure being provided for new programs? Are measures taken to ensure that established penal programs which are working well are not being jeopardized? Further, are all staff being given the opportunity to update their skills through special training programs as reform measures are introduced, or are some being denied that privilege, and does this result in friction among the staff members? How well are the unions providing representation for their members or forwarding grievances on behalf of their members to the administration? What is the guard to warden relationship?

I think it is necessary that the committee and others recognize that there is a divergence of viewpoint between the administrator and the custodial officer, in the same way that there is a divergence of view between employer and employee in any other sector of industry. Is this divergence or difference in view in any way detrimental to the efficient functioning of a rehabilitative penal institution? Secondly, with regard to inmates, I think the committee should direct its attention to the re-evaluation of the concept of a hierarchy of security in prisons—that is, minimum, medium and maximum security institutions. What are the criteria for determining what sort of institution a criminal enters, and for how long? I think there should be a full examination of psychiatric facilities. Are they sufficient? What about the idea of maximum security hospitals?

Then, I think the committee should look at the problems that are brought about when disruption by a few inmates results in restrictive measures being applied to the total inmate population. I think here particularly of the situation at Millhaven when 14 inmates escaped and all recently granted privileges were subsequently withdrawn from 350 inmates. The resulting tension that this aroused did much to lead to the onset of the deterioration in morale both on the part of the staff and the inmates at Millhaven in the following months. I think there should be a detailed examination of guard-convict relations, of how each is perceived by the other. The committee should be allowed to call both inmates and guards as witnesses.

● (2230)

I would specifically ask that the committee take a special look at the problems inherent in prisons for women. Whether or not we care to admit it, there is discrimination in this area. It is all very well to say that the concept of temporary absence should be changed, investigated and reorganized, but a temporary absence or a weekend pass to a woman inmate in Kingston means nothing if she comes from British Columbia or Newfoundland. Since this is the only institution for women in the country, I do not mean to imply that this is the only point of discrimination. I

[Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands).]

want to mention two areas in this regard that should be investigated.

It is permissible for an inmate to make a long distance telephone call once a month at his or her own expense. If you happen to be an inmate in a prison for women and you come from British Columbia that is a much higher cost for you to bear than if you come from Ontario or Quebec, or if you are in an institution for men, as these are located all across the country. If you are in a prison for women there is only one, and that is often many miles distant from your home. Furthermore, the educational facilities in the prison for women are very mediocre, in fact non-existent, as compared to those provided in institutions for men. The hierarchy of security at the prison for women is very complicated in that the minimum, medium and maximum security prisons are all meshed into one. There should be some way of differentiating between the treatment meted out to women who are incarcerated as medium security prisoners and those who have been sentenced as maximum security inmates.

I should have liked to see the criteria of the committee broadened to encompass the whole question of sentencing, the role of the judiciary and the manner in which crimes of a similar nature receive sentences of radically dissimilar lengths in different parts of the country. This is taking place and it is not fair. Perhaps this could be the subject of an additional study by the committee.

Finally, from the point of view of the public, I think the committee should be empowered to suggest methods to ensure that a new openness exists with regard to penitentiary facilities so that public fears can be allayed. What constructive role, for instance, can the media play? How quickly can visitors' committees with proper authority be set up and made to function? How can community involvement be designed to strengthen rehabilitation? Few prisoners die in jail from natural causes. Most of them eventually are released back into society. How can the public help them if it is not informed of the facts, and the public has the right to know these facts? The committee should press for less secrecy and more openness on the part of the penitentiary system, an openness that is free of distortion and distrust.

In this connection I want to quote briefly from the recent Swackhammer report where it is stated:

Thirty-eight years ago the Archambault Report commented that under the present system existing in the Canadian penitentiaries, what is going on in the institutions is shrouded with absolute secrecy, giving rise to suspicion and misgivings, which are further exalted by extravagant and abused tales of ex-prisoners and the imagination of sentimentalists. As a consequence, although, for the sake of security, no undue information should be given, a practical check of what is going on should be made. The prisoner feels that he has no access to a fair administration of justice and is absolutely removed from the protection of his fellow man.'

I may say that the custodial staff and the general public have similar reservations. Those comments which were made in 1938 are equally pertinent today in 1973. I hope that the activities of this committee can contribute to the resolution of these many problems.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I think all hon. members will agree that most of what has to