

Parole and Penitentiary Acts

Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan), had indicated that the Liberal Party supported this proposal and was prepared to vote in favour of it. Can the Hon. Member inform me which is right?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, we support the Bill as submitted by the Senate but we do not support the Bill without the amendment. We believe in the general principle of the Bill. There should be a procedure for cancelling early release on mandatory supervision. We do support the basic principle of the Bill, but we only support it with the Senate's amendment which provides that if there is a disagreement regarding early release, an appeal should be made to the courts.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, my colleague made it clear that he and his Party support the principle of the legislation. Presumably the legislation is designed to try to protect the public from dangerous criminals. How does the Hon. Member come to the conclusion that letting a person out of prison without supervision, which is the impact of this legislation, will protect the public? How is it that it is better to have a dangerous person on the streets without supervision than it is to have a dangerous person on the streets in a supervised way?

Mr. Prud'homme: That's not what he said.

Mr. Keeper: That is the position of the Liberal Party and the position of this legislation. The legislation provides that a person is kept in prison for the entire term of his sentence and is then released on to the streets without supervision. How can that lead to safety in the streets?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member pretends that this Bill does away completely with parole and earned remission. It does not. It will still be possible under the Parole Act for inmates to be released after serving two-thirds of their sentences, and I support that. It will still be possible for inmates to be released on mandatory supervision as a result of earned remission.

The Hon. Member was pretending or suggesting that this Bill would end all mandatory supervision on early release. It does not. It simply gives the Parole Board with, we hope, the right to an appeal to the courts, the right to cancel early release in some cases. We would hope that the number of those cases would be very limited. According to what we have heard, there are now from 7 to 11 such cases in all of Canada. That means that the great majority of people who have earned remission would still go out on the streets under mandatory supervision.

We support the position of the Hon. Member but we also feel that there are exceptional cases in which it is fairly clear that inmates are dangerous. In those cases only, there should be a provision to cancel release on mandatory supervision.

We do agree with the general principle that it is better to enter society in a gradual way under supervision, and I said that during my remarks. However, we are not supporting a Bill that would cancel parole or earned remission and mandatory

supervision altogether. The Bill only deals with exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to hear the Hon. Member indicate that he did not believe that we had returned today because of the actions of the Senate. I am sure the Hon. Member was present in the House on Friday, June 27. He will recall that a number of Bills were passed and went to the Senate that day. To the best of my knowledge, all of the Bills, with the exception of Bill C-67, received unanimous consent for passage in the Senate that day. One Senator withheld unanimous consent on Bill C-67, and that meant that if the Bill was to pass, the House would have to be recalled to deal with it. All of the other Bills which received the consent of the Senate that day returned to the House that day, were passed by the House and did become law that day. I am sure the Hon. Member would like to correct his remarks for the record.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I will not correct my remarks at all. The Bills the Senate agreed to pass quickly were Bills to which it had no objection. The Government knew that the Senate objected to this Bill in its form because the Senate had amended the Liberal Government's Bill in that same form.

Mr. Redway: But it was just one Senator.

Mr. Allmand: No, it was not just one Senator. One Senator denied consent but he did it on behalf of a lot of others.

When it came to the vote on the Bill, all the Senators approved of the Bill, with the amendment that there must be an appeal to the courts. The Solicitor General knew that that sentiment existed in the Senate. The Bill was sent to the Senate on Friday afternoon, the last day, and the Senate was expected to pass the Bill with little or no debate and without that amendment, but the Government knew that the same Senators who had wanted that amendment in the past were still there.

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By the way, in a previous Parliament Conservative Senators voted for that amendment. However, to send the Bill to the Senate on the last day, knowing that that objection existed in the Senate, was completely foolish and did not take account of that sentiment in the Senate. Knowing that that sentiment existed, the Government should have at least sent the Bill to the Senate in March or April, and it would have had time to deal with it without bringing us back in the middle of the summer. However, it did not do it.

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity once again to make a few remarks in respect of Bill C-67. As Your Honour is quite aware, I have directed remarks in respect of the Bill on a good number of occasions in the past. First, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs which dealt with the Bill for many weeks in committee hearings. The committee pressed forward on the Bill with all possible haste and ensured that it got out of committee as quickly as possible,