

That was reported to me by an ex-prisoner who told me that in the spring of that year there was very much dissatisfaction because they were not allowed to get cigarette papers. That dissatisfaction grew and culminated in the riot of October, 1922, but throughout the whole criticism has been in regard to Kingston. All the seven penitentiaries are run on the same principle, the same rules, the same regulations, but the criticism has all centred on Kingston where the seven communists are confined.

Miss MACPHAIL: What about St. Vincent de Paul? There are several communists there.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I am talking about communist activities.

Miss MACPHAIL: But there are communists at St. Vincent de Paul.

Mr. GUTHRIE: But the criticism has centred on Kingston. During all the discussion this session there has not been any mention of any other Canadian penitentiary than Kingston. All the letters that have been sent out; the fifty thousand odd messages I have received in the way of telegrams, letters, postal cards, insulting advertising in regard to myself, are all in regard to Kingston penitentiary and no other penitentiary in Canada is ever mentioned. All the agitation in the newspapers points to Kingston. I say to the hon. member for Southeast Grey: I give her the reason. It is on account of the communist prisoners who started some activities in Kingston but whose efforts have been from time to time aided by those of Smith and his so-called Canadian Labour Defence League. They are the chief agitators. He is the man who has sent this unfounded, lying document to members of the House of Commons. This document is dated June 18. I am not going to read it all. He says that 459,000 people have petitioned me; I would have said a couple of million, but he has got it down to 459,000. And he says:

To-day the condition of the seven is worse than ever.

That is a lie, that is the only word to use.

The Behan death has never been properly explained, and from authentic sources come stories that this was one of the cruelest since the Ormond regime of episodes that occurred there. But evidently this is not enough. For the last two weeks Ormond has been "reorganizing" things. Part of this reorganization has been to fling the seven communists again into the "hole."

That is an absolute lie. They are not in the hole and they never have been. The cells [Mr. Guthrie.]

under the keeper's room is what he refers to as the hole. The communists are not there and never have been there. He says:

Into the "hole," the prison of isolation,—

That is better.

—where they were kept five days locked up,—

That is not true.

—and where they are now sleeping on punishment beds,—

That is an absolute lie. I made special inquiry; they have steel spring beds and two mattresses on top of that, and also both summer and winter bedding. If Smith went to England he would find that in all English prisons the prisoners sleep on plank beds. We give them a proper spring bed and two mattresses on top of that, and that is what all these communists have. Smith has not been in the institution. This may have been reported to him, but this is just another of his reckless statements which constitutes a lie.

—and in the daytime doing heavy work in the coal and wood yard.

They have been working on the docks at the lightest work in the penitentiary, and are there at their own request. They wanted outside work; they asked for it and they got it. To all appearances they are happy and contented.

The cruelties have played havoc with the health of Tim Buck and his associates.

I have had their health watched very carefully, and they are all in excellent health. True, I will grant you there has been a great deal of worry and fretting; there must be, because I do not think penitentiary confinement is conducive to health and strength and vigour of body and mind, but that is part of the punishment. But as far as medical men can judge their health is excellent. Two of them were liberated last week by my hon. friend the Solicitor General (Mr. Dupre) who sees to that branch of the Department of Justice. They were treated just as the brokers were treated. They were liberated because on June 29, they had served half their time, and they were liberated on that date, on ticket of leave, which enables them to serve the remainder of their sentence outside of prison walls. If they comply with the conditions which are endorsed on the ticket of leave they will never be called upon to serve the remainder of the sentence. And when the other communist prisoners have served half their time they will be treated in precisely the same manner, without any variation. But there is a proviso which goes with this state-