

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that the Solicitor General said he would be happy to look into the matter. I now draw your attention to another document, a news item which appeared in the Kingston *Whig Standard* four days later, on May 20. I will quote from it. It shows that the minister must have looked into the matter, but in a manner harmful and detrimental to the interests of the Canadian public and not in keeping with the protection of persons and property. I quote from the *Whig Standard* the article headlined, "Prisons suspend rule":

The Commissioner of Penitentiaries has suspended a regulation that requires inmates of federal prisons to pay for damage done to prison property.

The regulation states that when an inmate damages government property he may be financially liable for the full cost or a portion of the cost of repairing the damage.

Regional director John Moloney acknowledged Friday that inmates no longer had to pay. This is a "recent innovation" he said. He did not know why the regulation was suspended.

In the past, inmates made good the damage out of pay credits. They could be deprived of pay up to three months if necessary, but at that time their case was automatically reviewed.

The publishing of this latest piece of policy emanating from the office of the Solicitor General compelled me to ask another question in the House on May 30, which has brought us to this confrontation tonight. Public opinion in my constituency is aroused over this latest policy or desertion of policy on the part of the Solicitor General and his department. I asked, as recorded at page 2675 of *Hansard* for May 30, the following question:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General and it deals with a matter I asked the minister about on May 16 concerning deduction of amounts of damages done by inmates to prison property from the salaries of prisoners in federal institutions. On May 20 the regulation holding prisoners financially responsible for wilful damage to prison property was suspended. Would the minister tell the House who authorized that directive?

It has always been an axiom of the common law that Canadians shall be held responsible for damage they do to persons and property. The law applies as well to persons in our penitentiaries and we must uphold especially the regulations governing those persons. Neither the Commissioner of Penitentiaries nor the Solicitor General have the power to change this law. How crazy can the government get in implementing its permissive society?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Solicitor General are now projecting their version of the permissive society even into the prisons. Now, under their policy, a person convicted of crime and incarcerated in an institution is a privileged person. The suspension of this time-honoured regulation will only invite wilful damage and vandalism, encourage more riots and discourage the recruitment of guards for the penal service. The guards at present face a tough enough time. There is no need to make it tougher for them to maintain order and to perform their duties in our prisons.

The cost of Millhaven prison, the most commodious and modern in Canada, will be over \$20 million when completed. According to the evidence I have placed before you, and according to reports of speeches alleged to have been made by the Solicitor General in western Canada, he and the Prime Minister are following dangerous policies

and are now saying to the criminal elements of Canada, "We honour you in our participatory democracy. We are removing most of the deterrents to your chosen vocation of crime. If you go to prison, we will give you a better standard of living than many taxpaying Canadians enjoy. You can destroy all the property you like; we will not hold you morally or financially responsible. The taxpayer will pay for your damages. We will also restore to you your privileges and in your commodious quarters we will make the taxpayer restore whatever you destroy. You can retain the salaries which we will pay you and thumb your noses at the judges of the courts who sent you here, for you may soon have a privilege that they do not possess, that of the franchise."

May I remind the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker, that the law of Canada stipulates that we shall at all times maintain the protection of persons and property. It is for this very reason that the Solicitor General's office exists. On behalf of the Canadian people I demand that the minister reveal who authorized this relaxation of law as evidenced in the directive in question. Originally, the director said he did not know why the regulation was suspended. This House and the Canadian people are quite sure that the Solicitor General knows why. The Canadian people are sick of and disgusted with the permissive policies of this government and its failure to govern. They are revolted by the abandonment of well-founded principles and deterrents which used to be assured by law, and they deplore the sick society which has resulted.

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as usual the hon. member of the opposition is only half right. He suggested that the damage in Millhaven amounted to \$4,000; actually, it amounted to \$2,200.

Mr. Alkenbrack: I said the amount was estimated.

Mr. Hogarth: Then is \$4,000 an estimate of \$2,200 worth of damage?

An hon. Member: You must take inflation into account.

Mr. Hogarth: May I point out, to correct the hon. member further, that there is no intention on the part of the Solicitor General to relieve any individual inmate from responsibility for civil damages or property destroyed or damaged in our penitentiaries. What has been decided is that the collection of such damages will no longer be pursued merely on the basis of an administrative directive from the commissioner. Henceforth, in appropriate cases collection of such damages will be pursued by a regulation appropriately passed under the provisions of the Penitentiaries Act or, in the alternative, by civil process in the courts of ordinary civil jurisdiction.

• (2210)

MANPOWER—LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS AND EXTENSION OF TIME FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, today I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Perrault) if any consideration would be given by the government to