

Government Orders

That is being removed in many cases, in part because of funding cuts and in part because of this legislation. I am disappointed the government has failed to provide the support services which are necessary for those newly released, particularly those who find themselves in a different community from which they came or who are released after an extended period in prison.

Sentencing and parole are tied together. If inmates are going to be released after two-thirds of their sentence, surely it is worth while looking at the length of the sentence. Here the government was urged to do exactly that and introduce the two bills at the same time. Instead we have one and there is no sign of the other. There is no indication, no promise from the minister that the other will be forthcoming in a reasonable time.

We are left in a situation where the National Parole Board will become powerless to deal with various offences. Judges will now know that whatever sentence they give, however inadequate they may feel it is or however heavy they may feel it is, it is going to be brought to an end at the end of two-thirds of the sentence regardless of the behaviour of the inmate. This must be a little disappointing from the point of view of the judiciary as well.

Finally the government dealt with the office of the correctional investigator and went through some kind of further indication of its obsession with secrecy. Surely the correctional investigator's report should have come to this House instead of to the Solicitor General.

What we have done here is that if the correctional investigator gets into a prison and uncovers an unholy mess, the report will go to the Solicitor General and not to Parliament. There will never be any public exposure of anything that goes wrong in a federal prison if it is investigated by the correctional investigator.

Why would the report not be made public? Why would the information not be available to members of Parliament directly, instead of to the Solicitor General? It is an obsession with secrecy and it is reflected in the government's rejection of certain amendments.

I want to turn to the amendment I obtained leave of the House to propose last week when we were debating the report stage of this bill. From 1834 until 1961 members of Parliament had the right to enter any federal prison. For the last 30 years of that period it was during

business hours, but for the first 100 years or so it was at any time. That right is not being given back in this bill.

• (1140)

I moved an amendment to provide for that right to be returned to members of Parliament. I suggest it is a worth-while right. It is something that should be considered by the House. We received an extremely weak answer from the acting parliamentary secretary to the minister on this issue. The minister himself did not respond. The parliamentary secretary said nothing about it in his speech the other day.

Frankly I was disappointed that we did not get some reasoned explanation as to why this was not done. I think I know what the reason is. I think the hon. member for Scarborough West knows what the reason is. The government is obsessed with secrecy. The government is very much afraid that if members of Parliament drop into a prison and see something is wrong—a guard has been beaten or an inmate has been beaten—maybe something would get out to the public that things were not just hunky-dory in a federal institution.

With its obsession about letting out that anything could possibly be wrong, the clamps will be put on. Regulations will be passed by Orders in Council that restrict access to members of Parliament, senators and judges so that they may visit prisons only under certain terms and conditions and frankly at times that are convenient or appropriate in the eyes of the head of the institution.

An hon. member: Sanitized conditions.

Mr. Milliken: As my hon. friend from Hamilton West says, sanitized conditions.

I want to say openly in this House that I have never had any difficulty in entering any of the prisons in Kingston. When I have sought to go, I have always been welcomed and what I have wanted to visit has been made open and available to me.

However I must say that I do not tend to exercise my privileges at night. I do not tend to go at the crack of dawn, at five o'clock in the morning or something like that. I do not go at eight, nine, ten or even one o'clock in the morning. It does not happen. I go during the day, during regular business hours for the most part. I was