

*Urban Transportation*

**Mr. Speaker:** If there is agreement, perhaps the proposed motion might be read by the mover.

**Mr. Reynolds:** Then I move, seconded by the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Beattie):

That the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs be empowered to investigate the administration of the penitentiary system, including security, parole and temporary absences, and that it report its recommendations as soon as reasonable after a thorough inquiry.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is understood that this is the motion that will be put at eight o'clock this evening, subject to the conditions enumerated by the parliamentary secretary to which hon. members have unanimously agreed. I gather that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wish to indicate that as far as we are concerned, we agree with the suggestions that have been reported to Your Honour.

● (1800)

However, I should like to enter a caveat, Mr. Speaker, in respect of the right some time this evening to suggest that we set a time when the debate will end. This is not part of the agreement as it was not possible to achieve that, but I think instead of the debate going on all night we might agree to a cut-off time some time this evening. Perhaps one of us might propose that later.

[Translation]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, we agree to discuss this motion. As suggested by the hon. member who just spoke, we too would like the length of the debate to be limited.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. There appears to be unanimous agreement to the conditions expressed by hon. members including the hon. member who proposed the motion. I believe this agreement would dispose of two matters: first, the motion under Standing Order 26 proposed earlier today by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta. In view of the fact there is to be a debate on this question this evening, we should not, of course, proceed under the proposed motion. Second, I believe consideration of this motion and its disposition at the end of the debate would effectively dispose of the notice of motion for concurrence in the report of the committee tabled earlier today by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard).

[Translation]

Is it agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** The debate which was under way at five o'clock will, of course, be deemed to have been adjourned. The hour set aside for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

At 6.04 p.m. the House took recess.

[Mr. Speaker.]

## AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

## AUTHORIZATION OF INVESTIGATION BY STANDING COMMITTEE OF SECURITY OF PENITENTIARIES, PAROLE AND TEMPORARY ABSENCES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order. The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) has moved:

That the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs be empowered to investigate the administration of the penitentiary system, including security, parole and temporary absences, and that it report its recommendations as soon as reasonable after a thorough inquiry.

**Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta):** Mr. Speaker, permit me to state, on behalf of not only the people of my riding of Burnaby-Richmond-Delta but all Canadians who are concerned about the present state of affairs in our penitentiary system, that I am happy there has been unanimous agreement of the House to debate this motion. It is gratifying to see that the concern of the people of this country can result in the transcending of political lines and that action can be taken on their behalf and in their best interests on very short notice.

The latest break-out from St. Vincent de Paul of five highly dangerous criminals was indeed the last straw in what has become a matter of almost national disgrace. During a recent visit to the British Columbia penitentiary I learned that some of the inmates referred to the almost daily reports of escapes and violations of leave passes as "Comedy Night in Canada". But, Mr. Speaker, this is anything but a laughing matter. These break-outs are only part of the existing problem in our whole judicial and penal system. Our courts are bogged down, our prisons are overcrowded and our rehabilitation program is in a sorry state of disrepair.

The parole system needs a complete overhaul, and authority for deciding the length of sentences must be returned to the trial judge. What is the point of a judge carefully considering all the evidence, having the opportunity to view the accused during what is often a lengthy trial, being fully aware of all aspects of the case, and in many cases even knowing the accused having dealt with him before, and then after reaching a decision as to sentence seeing that sentence commuted by a body far removed from the actual scene of the crime? It is no wonder that judges are speaking out in irate tones against the Parole Board.

Certainly, it is no easy task for a judge to pass sentence on a man, but when he sees the same man before him again at a time when he is still supposed to be in jail from the previous offence, he wonders about the mentality and the thinking of the person who released the man back into society. Possibly if this body known as the Parole Board had to serve the sentence of anyone who violated the