

Parole and Penitentiary Acts

Board. I personally would prefer to see this power in the courts, but not in the way the Hon. Member has suggested. I would prefer to see the courts' right of sentencing redefined very carefully. Perhaps we should look at a provision such that once a court hands out a sentence, no one will have the right to release the prisoner any earlier than at the end of the sentence. No one would have the right to decide to release the prisoner or not to do so at the end of two-thirds of the sentence.

As the Hon. Member knows, that is under review as well. A sentencing commission is reviewing that procedure and I hope that when we receive the commission's report, we will look very seriously at redefining the right of a judge to impose a sentence. That will have the same effect as the proposal to which the Hon. Member referred, which is that it will take away the discretion to let a prisoner go, but it will also mean that when a judge imposes a sentence, that sentence means just what it says it means.

I am very much in favour of this legislation and opposed to the amendments put forward by my friend, the Hon. Member for Burnaby. A recent case from the City of Toronto, the Leander Savoury case, is an excellent example of why we should not adopt the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Burnaby. This was a case of a man who was sentenced to jail for what many people might consider minor offences. However, members of the National Parole Board said that they did not want to release him into society after he had served two-thirds of his sentence because they had a fear, concern and suspicion that he would commit violent crimes. In fact, that is exactly what happened.

Members of the Parole Board were forced to release this man because the legislation said that they did not have any alternative. After his release, he served on so-called mandatory supervision, consisting of a telephone call or two over a period of three months or so to his parole officer. Never once did he meet the parole officer face to face. While he was on mandatory supervision, he committed something like 30 different armed robberies and one murder. In fact, his life was ended in a police shoot-out at the end of that three-month period. That is the sort of thing that shows that the National Parole Board needs discretion and an ability to be able to identify those people it feels are potentially violent offenders. The Parole Board needs the authority that is in this Bill.

I could point to many other instances which show that this legislation is needed. It is needed and it is long overdue. If we limit in some way, shape or form the authority of the National Parole Board at this stage, we will be playing with fire. We have seen things like this happen regularly ever since the mandatory supervision provisions were introduced in the first place, and until we find a better method, we have to try to make these provisions work and work properly. I hope that the House will support the Government's position and reject the motion of the Hon. Member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The first question is on Motion No. 8 in the name of Mr. Robinson. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): In my opinion the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Motion No. 8 (Mr. Robinson) negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): That disposes of Motion No. 9. The next question is on Motion No. 10 in the name of Mr. Robinson. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): In my opinion the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Motion No. 10 (Mr. Robinson) negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The next question is on Motion No. 11 in the name of Mr. Robinson. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): All those opposed please say nay.