

*Penitentiary Act*

that he would be reinstated but he remained suspended until last Monday when he was paid off up to November 29. The matter for which he was suspended was one not under his jurisdiction according to the regulations of the penitentiary. The superintendent being new on the job and not knowing the regulations laid a charge and the keeper was suspended. I have been fighting for twenty-five years to have these men given the opportunity of a hearing. Has a man in this country no right to know why he is dismissed? Is he to be told: "There is your notice, get out." If there are communists and reds in this country, more have been made during the last four or five months by such actions as these than could be made by ten Woodsworths, fifty Heaps or one hundred Irvines. If a man has any red blood in him, he wants to fight for himself.

Mr. McINTOSH: A Ross generally has.

Mr. ROSS: A Ross does not have to have questions asked for him; he can state his own case and ask his own questions.

A deputy warden who had been twenty-eight years in the service of this institution was dismissed. The charge made against him in the report was absolutely false. This man has had no chance to defend himself against the position in which he was put in the report. Will this country stand for a man having such an arbitrary power that he can dismiss another man who has had twenty-eight years of service? Should not sympathy be shown for a man who has had twenty-eight years of service without one black mark? I know of another case not many years ago where a deputy warden and another official who had been twenty-six years in the service were dismissed from Portsmouth penitentiary because of a charge laid by one of the lowest pieces of humanity that could come out of the slums of Montreal. These men were dismissed upon the word of a convict.

The report states that in certain cases the men resigned, but if they did so, they resigned with a pistol at their head. They were told to sign their resignations or their gratuities would be lost. There should be an open hearing of these cases and I offer to resign my seat if they cannot be proved. I have that much courage anyway. These men are Liberals as well as Conservatives, so I am not talking from the political point of view. I have never yet canvassed civil servants during any of the elections because I feel that they should be independent. I am not interested in the appointment of guards but I am interested in these dismissals. Unless something is done I intend to fight just as long as

[Mr. Ross.]

I am a member of parliament. I shall deal with other sections of the report when the opportunity presents itself later on.

Mr. C. G. POWER (Quebec South): Mr. Speaker, in rising to support the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Ross) may I say on behalf of most of the hon. members on this side that his strictures on the Department of Justice would, we believe, apply equally to most other departments. Many arbitrary dismissals and dismissals without investigation have been made since this government came into power. May I offer him in this instance, and in others if he so desires, our assistance in order to bring before this house the injustice of many of these dismissals. I feel it is my duty to bring before the house certain portions of the report of D. M. Ormond in connection with the Kingston penitentiary disturbances. This report is addressed to the Minister of Justice and has a bearing upon the matter now before the house in that he criticizes very severely the system of appointment of guards, wardens and other employees of the penitentiaries. The following appears at the bottom of page 8 of the report, under the heading Training of Guards:

Shortly after the end of the late war, a fair sprinkling of guards were brought into the service who had had military training of some type or other. These, however, were not closely scrutinized, and at the present time there are many guards who had little or no service that would recommend them to be penitentiary or prison guards, mostly having terminated from three to five years' service with the rank of private, which would indicate that they had reached their limit in military advancement, and could not be expected to show a higher standard in civil life.

I have never posed in this house as the friend of the soldier, in fact I have opposed a great many of the things which the soldiers wished to have put into force. I have never been a consistent upholder of the preference for returned soldiers, but I do think that any one of us who has had experience with private soldiers during the war would be false to the friends he made during that time if he allowed an insult of this kind to pass unchallenged in a public document. I had the honour and privilege of serving as a private soldier for a considerable period during the war. The hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Gray) served as a private soldier during the whole war, and I say without any fear of contradiction that I am prepared to take his judgment against that of Brigadier General Ormond at any time.

I do not wish to say anything disagreeable about Brigadier General Ormond, because he