

Oral Questions

ernment was considering and acting on, the implementation of—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Domm: Quite seriously, Madam Speaker, I refer to implementation and action in this House. Will the Solicitor General assure this House that he will allow private members' bills which are now on the order paper to come forward for debate and vote so that we can know whether in conscience the members of this House of Commons are prepared to substitute their mouths for their words on paper and vote on capital punishment? Will the minister give the opportunity to members of this House to vote on capital punishment?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I am not the member of the government responsible for the business of the House, and the question was about the business of the House. I could remind hon. members opposite that this is an opposition day and they could have chosen any subject that they consider important.

An hon. Member: That is a cop-out.

Mr. Domm: Madam Speaker, in light of the state of crisis, the hostage-taking and the fact that a prison guard has been killed, I consider that a direct cop-out on the issue.

My supplementary question to the minister deals with the report of a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs under a former Liberal government which recommended—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Domm: I am going to remind the minister of his own report.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am afraid I have to remind the hon. member that he has the floor now in order to ask a question, not to make a speech.

Mr. Domm: Madam Speaker, would the Solicitor General assure this House that he will implement the recommendations of that special subcommittee by setting up a special institution for the hard-core criminals, those serving 25-year sentences, bringing them in from all over Canada? Will the minister implement the recommendation of that subcommittee? Will he give action to their words?

Mr. Kaplan: Madam Speaker, in the first place the inmates serving 25 years are not necessarily the most violent and dangerous in the system. That group includes many of the most violent and dangerous inmates, but there are others as well with extra security needs who have to be considered.

As to the report of the MacGuigan committee, it has been very substantially implemented, as I indicated when I appeared before the justice committee. I would be glad to appear before that committee again on my estimates and go

through those recommendations which my predecessors, including my immediate predecessor, took some care and concern to implement to the degree it was considered practical to do so.

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PENITENTIARIES**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. In view of the recent hostage-taking at Dorchester which suggests serious deficiencies in policy-making and/or management at one or more levels of the correctional service of Canada, will the minister reconsider his outright rejection of recommendation No. 24 of the special subcommittee on penitentiaries, chaired by his illustrious colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs, which strongly recommended the appointment of a board of five members, reporting to the Solicitor General, which would be responsible for the making of policy?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I do disagree with that recommendation, and I believe my immediate predecessor, the Conservative solicitor general, did so as well. Because it would remove the accountability of the system to this chamber, and I am not prepared to see that change. Certainly I would be prepared to discuss it with the justice committee, but it would seem unwise to me to interject between Parliament and the correctional service of Canada the sort of board of governors that Air Canada or the CBC has, which reduces the accountability of the institutions in question to the Parliament of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Halliday: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is again directed to the Solicitor General. If the minister had read the report he would realize that the matter of accountability and responsibility was dealt with by the committee. Inasmuch as the minister has essentially refused to set up a public inquiry which would look into the affair at Dorchester, and at the same time has refused to implement the subcommittee report *in toto*, as recommended by that committee, will he now implement the intent of recommendation No. 65 of that report by making a special reference of this subject matter to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs?

Mr. Kaplan: As to whether or not I have read the report, Madam Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that I sat on the committee, I helped gather evidence and I worked on the preparation of that report. On the question of the reference, there is a tremendous volume of work for the justice committee, and I would be happy to deal with questions like that when my estimates, which are now before the committee, are considered. Frankly, it would be for the committee to consider how much of their estimates time they would want to