

Penitentiaries

even more riots, although it has been criticized over and over again and referred to as an "electronic 1984". I suggest that the board of inquiry should deal with the lack of occupational training and with the Parole Act. Both these topics have given rise to complaints by the inmates. The board of inquiry should also suggest steps to avert another riot. Let me return to the point I made a few minutes ago. Surely some permanent method must be devised to provide for discussions between a committee of inmates and a committee of prison guards in order that intolerable situations that exist can be rectified immediately before they reach explosive proportions.

Finally, I think that the committee of inquiry should deal with that small group in penitentiaries which constitutes, even in the eyes of the most hardened criminals, the dregs of society. This little group needs protection from the other inmates of penitentiaries. I refer to sex deviates, Crown witnesses, stool pigeons, informers and the like. During our visits to certain penitentiaries in Canada we noted friction building up whenever that group of people was in close contact with the general prison population. It may surprise hon. members to know that the most hardened wife beater is still entitled to look down his nose at someone. The person he looks down his nose at is the sexual deviate. To this extent the element of segregation is involved in penitentiaries. I gather this was a factor in the Kingston riot although the Solicitor General has not dealt with it. That factor must be considered by the board of inquiry.

The members of the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee had an opportunity to visit some of the penitentiaries and to observe some of these problems. We will be very anxious and eager to learn the results of this inquiry and what steps the minister will take to head off future incidents of this type.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the citizens' committee who spent many hours during the daytime and at night in an attempt to resolve the problem at Kingston penitentiary. It may well be that we will have similar committees in the future. Periodically over the years we have experienced riots at different prisons throughout our penitentiary system. Some of these riots have been worse than others. The riot some years ago at Kingston during which there was a fire and a great deal of burning occurred, as at St. Vincent de Paul, involved a great deal more damage in one sense than the riot which concluded over the past weekend.

We all regret very much the death of one of the inmates. Presumably an attempt will be made to discover how it occurred and criminal charges will be laid if the person who caused this death can be identified.

I am wondering about the government's attitude on the matter of destruction of public property. I understand the damage has been estimated at \$1 million, but who knows what it is in terms of dollar value. We should realize, however, that under the Criminal Code there is provision for a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment for destruction of government property. As a result of riots in the past certain individuals have been charged in the

criminal courts and, following conviction, have had the maximum sentence of 14 years meted out for participating in a revolt against the system. I suggest very sincerely that the minister and the government should look very warily at the approach that has been adopted in the past, that of laying criminal charges in an attempt to counterbalance the situation for the future, because it probably will not work.

The government response to such situations in the past has been to punish the individuals involved either within the system or by laying charges in court. It has been one of punishment of the whole inmate population by in effect putting the lid on the joint, by removing all privileges, recreational facilities and the like for long periods of time, by segregating individuals and keeping them locked up in cells for 23½ hours out of 24 hours every day and permitting them only half an hour for exercise. I believe that the government's response in the past through this type of retaliatory oppression, removal of privileges and punishment for all regardless of their participation or non-participation in such things really will not serve us very well in the future if that is to be the sole action taken as a result of the riot at Kingston.

A number of questions have not been answered and I think two are of extreme importance. It would have behooved the minister well to indicate from his point of view what he knows concerning the answers to these two questions or what he may have surmised as to the situation. One question is, what are the recommendations, if any, that have come from the citizens' committee which spent hours in that institution talking to the inmates' committee. The members of the citizens' committee were liaising back and forth and undoubtedly have a far greater insight into the feelings which led up to this revolt than could possibly be derived through any board of inquiry or working group such as the minister seeks to establish. I believe it would serve the public interest well to know what the recommendations of that citizen's committee were or whether there will be any forthcoming in the future.

I also think it would have been well for the minister to give some assessment of his views concerning the real reasons behind the riot. I am sure it was not just a riot by people who objected to the prospect of being transferred to another institution, Millhaven, on the basis of rumours concerning what existed there and what sort of oppressive and electronic devices might be there to invade their privacy. I believe it goes much deeper than just being another riot in a penitentiary. I believe it represents partly a revolt against the judicial system and concern that we give lip service to the idea of rehabilitation in the penitentiary system but do not in fact do anything about it. It is a revolt against the fact of life that some penitentiaries are there just as places for people to be locked up in.

Any attempt at effective rehabilitation work within the prison system as we know it today will run counter to the idea and concept of security and custody and the obligation on the part of the penitentiary service to carry out the instructions of the courts, namely, to keep a person in jail for a stated period of time. We can talk