

*Kurt Meyer*

Minister of National Defence was asked to make a statement with regard to the status of Kurt Meyer, and he did so on October 22, as reported at page 245 of *Hansard*. After explaining that Kurt Meyer was being committed to Werl prison in Germany, a prison which he designated as a Canadian service prison, he went on to say:

The answer is that Meyer is still under the control and jurisdiction of Canada.

Today we read in a Canadian Press dispatch that when a representative of the Canadian Press called at Kurt Meyer's house on Saturday, with the expectation of seeing Mrs. Meyer—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Drew:** I might say, Mr. Speaker, that the representative of the Canadian Press assumed that the report would be taken with sufficient seriousness that he did not find it necessary to give any other explanation of the fact that he was calling at Kurt Meyer's house, expecting to see Mrs. Kurt Meyer and to obtain from her information about her husband. He found Kurt Meyer playing with his children, explaining that he had been released from prison under an arrangement whereby the prisoners at that particular prison camp are permitted to visit their homes. Remembering that this prisoner is under Canadian jurisdiction, the question arises as to whether the Canadian government has given authority to Kurt Meyer to visit his home at regular intervals in this way.

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** I understood that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of National Defence had inquired into this matter and had an answer prepared.

**Mr. R. O. Campney (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Kurt Meyer was transferred to a British prison at Werl in Germany—a prison which is operated for the punishment of war criminals convicted by Great Britain. While he was so transferred for purposes of incarceration, as the Minister of National Defence said at page 245 of *Hansard*, he remains under the control of the government of this country so far as sentence is concerned, and any release—that is, permanent release—would be within the jurisdiction of this government.

It is provided by section 178 of the National Defence Act that the minister may designate any prison as a service prison. As announced by the minister in the house on October 22, he so designated Werl prison as a service prison. Order in council P.C. 5596, dated October 18, 1951, was also tabled on October

22, setting out the regulations that govern prisoners in service prisons. Section 2 of those regulations specifically provides that a prisoner who is undergoing punishment in a place designated as a service prison under the National Defence Act shall be dealt with in the same manner as other prisoners in that place, and all the rules applicable to such other prisoners shall, in so far as circumstances permit, apply to him.

The regulations governing the operation of the prison at Werl are within the jurisdiction of the British authorities, and it is presumed that all prisoners there are subject to the same regulations as provided in the order in council to which I have referred.

We have made inquiries as to the specific rules dealing with the point raised by the leader of the opposition and have not yet received information as to what the rules in the British prison are. As soon as we have that information we will give it.

**Mr. Drew:** I would point out that the circumstances under which General Kurt Meyer came under the control of the Canadian government are very harrowing indeed to a number of Canadian families, and they affect the sentiments of a great number of Canadians in regard to the conduct of those responsible for military action. Kurt Meyer was found guilty of the responsibility for the death of certain Canadians. Either he was guilty or he was not. If he was guilty there was a form of punishment provided. If he was not guilty he should be freed. I submit further, Mr. Speaker, that there should be no intermediate stage. I do submit that it is a very surprising thing to be informed now that although the government has full responsibility for Kurt Meyer, whom they arranged to send to Germany, they have sent him to a prison whose rules they do not know. Judging from the answer that has been given, if these rules should provide that a prisoner be absent from the prison for six months, there would be no reason why it would not apply in this case. I would assume also that if the British authorities decided to extend that privilege to General Manstein and other prisoners, including General Kesselring—General Manstein and General Kesselring occupy cells on both sides of General Kurt Meyer—under the explanation that has been given, it would apply to General Kurt Meyer as well.

This is not something that is being raised by way of simply seeking to provoke a discussion. It is a matter of very deep and grave concern to all Canadians. This goes to the conduct of the military forces with which we were engaged in the war. Most certainly, if there was one man above