

he has given me his personal assurance that he is concerned about the safety and welfare of communities. But I believe there must be greater recognition of the fundamental principle that society must be protected. With regard to the rehabilitation of individuals who have transgressed the law, instead of turning them out without supervision for even short periods there have to be iron-clad guarantees that they are not going to perpetuate the crimes for which they have been incarcerated.

I realize there are those who say you cannot give iron-clad guarantees, that you cannot have an absolute assurance that there will not be a repetition of the offence. But I say that society has the right to expect it to the fullest possible extent, and that has not been so in the past several years. I think there has been an admission of this fact by speakers tonight. Therefore I call attention to this particular situation.

Since that fateful day when the former solicitor general announced this new government policy, the newspapers of this country have been filled with all manner of parole violations—murders, thefts, assaults and rapes—by dangerous criminals who have been let loose in the community in an exercise that is an experiment by the government. I do not believe that this is acceptable to the great majority of the Canadian people.

I speak as a representative of a community in a constituency where there are several penal institutions. For some time I have followed reports of court proceedings in the papers, and almost every week there have been reports of people who had been let out of jail on a pass and were unlawfully at large because they had not returned. We had a considerable number of violent and tragic crimes committed in our community by individuals who were out on pass or had been able to get out through lack of adequate security. This reached the point where the council of the municipality protested to the Solicitor General. The response of officials in charge of one of the institutions—the one to which I referred just now—said that the community was overreacting. I ask, how many rapes, how many thefts and how many other types of crime are we going to tolerate before we get stirred up and demand that something be done?

I suggest that because of laxity within the administration of the Department of the Solicitor General or the penitentiaries branch, which I suppose is an agency of the department, we are now facing a situation where people are alarmed. I even heard a very prominent resident of my community say that he had been giving serious consideration to moving out of the community, to moving out of the province altogether, because he was afraid for his family's welfare.

An hon. Member: Where would he go?

Mr. Mackasey: Send him to Verdun.

Mr. Patterson: It is suggested he be sent to Verdun. I mention this fact because I have another news article here which reads:

A spokesman for Solicitor General Warren Allmand said today a three-man inquiry commission will be established this week to investigate penitentiary security in Quebec.

Penitentiaries

This is not only needed in Quebec; it is needed right across the country.

Mr. Mackasey: Verdun is in Quebec.

Mr. Patterson: I realize that. I have talked to people who have worked in institutions in various provinces and they have presented me with a picture. Some say that very soon there will be no one in jail because guards are not allowed to exercise any discipline, they cannot fulfil their responsibilities, and they are given instructions not to rock the boat. I suggest this is a strange way to protect our society.

I do not think I have to draw on any illustrations tonight to indicate what is taking place as a result of the actions of the Parole Board. The chairman of the board has made a spirited defence of his organization and stewardship. But the people of this country are not satisfied when they see people out on parole engaging in violence and in crime, shooting people in cold blood, and so on. If I had time I could refer to one case, that of Robert Leroy Barber, but unfortunately I do not have time to go into detail.

One of the things that concerns the people of Canada is the question of security. Reference has been made to the Head case, a prisoner who during his last escapade—I say his last, but I do not know whether it will be his last because possibly he will be out again one of these days—brutally murdered Tanya Bush in the province of British Columbia. Not long after that, when his trial came up a man was transferred from Dorchester penitentiary, in New Brunswick, to testify at the trial. At his request he was placed in a medium security institution, and after two days he was allowed loose for about seven hours. He broke into a trailer home, tied up the husband and forced the wife to drive him to the city. On the way he sidetracked the car and raped the woman. All this by a man who was supposed to be confined under strict maximum security conditions and at whose own request was placed in a less secure institution!

How can these things take place? I guess it is like the other things that take place, such as at Cowansville where prisoners walked out of jail, and the latest incident where they walked out of one of our super-duper maximum security prisons. We find these things happening right across the board. I suggest it is the government's past policy, a policy that has not been corrected to this day, that has allowed a great many of these incidents to occur.

Last October the warden of Millhaven maximum security prison in Kingston stated that it was impossible to control 365 tough criminals housed in the prison. He said he had been stripped of disciplinary power by incompetent or inexperienced officials. Then he said:

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This has not only made controls of the inmate population impossible . . . but has almost completely destroyed the staff morale.

I can understand why. In any event, someone has suggested he got out but I do not think he used the same method as others have used. In this connection I want to mention that I have in my possession a series of letters from individuals and groups of individuals in my constituency who are tremendously concerned. For instance, I have a petition signed by about 650 people living in the