

Supply—Justice

Mr. Fulton: An inmate is allowed one visit per month and up to three visitors at one time.

Mr. Howard: Another question which I posed is, if a letter is written to an inmate which cannot be forwarded to him because of its contents, it is returned then to the sender, and is the inmate advised that a certain person wrote to him but he could not receive the letter?

Mr. Fulton: Yes, I am informed that the inmate is advised that the letter has been sent back to the sender.

Mr. Howard: May I make one or two comments about that? First, in so far as the letter being returned to the writer is concerned and the inmate being advised that he had received the letter, I may say that the last time I had the opportunity of visiting Kingston penitentiary I spoke to two inmates who claimed that this was not so. They said they had had relatives write to them and they discovered this quite some time after the letter had been written. The letter had been censored or had not been forwarded by whoever is responsible for not allowing letters to come in. The letter had been returned to the sender but the inmate had not been advised.

Something of that nature is quite upsetting to an inmate, especially if the letter happens to be from his wife or his parents or some very close relative. It is upsetting if the inmate does not hear from a relative for a month or something of that nature. I think some more strict application of this notification to the inmate that the letter has not been given to him because of its contents should be followed out.

I should like to inquire incidentally with respect to who the censors are, if that is what they are called, of this correspondence between inmates and persons outside. What qualifications do they have? Is there any guidance given to them? Is that their sole duty, the handling of mail in and out, or do they have something else to do?

In so far as visits are concerned, especially from relatives, I think it is rather unfortunate that this is confined to one a month. That may be sufficient in many cases. I am sure there are inmates who have no visitors or, perhaps, over a period of a year may have one or two visits because their families live some distance from the penitentiary. However, in other cases, I am sure this is not so. If an inmate, for the sake of argument had his home and his family in Kingston and was sentenced to Kingston penitentiary, I am sure you could expect the relatives would want to visit him. He would normally

[Mr. Howard.]

want to see them more than once a month. I think this provision should be relaxed.

In so far as the four letters a month are concerned, I hardly think that is sufficient. This may be because of my personal attitude toward writing, but I hardly think four letters would be sufficient in all cases. Inmates should not have to make a special plea to the warden to write a special letter. I believe you could extend the four letters a month to something greatly in excess of that. If a prisoner has a wife or has parents, for instance, it means he can write to them alternately, so that he would write to his wife twice a month and to his parents twice a month. If he has children, then the condition worsens. I think four letters a month for an inmate is far too strict a provision. There are many inmates who would not take advantage of the privilege of writing four letters a month, but for those inmates who would like to write more often I am sure it would be most helpful if we could expand the provision and allow the inmate to write more than four letters a month if he so desires. In so far as Joyceville is concerned, I understood the minister to say that this was to be a medium security prison.

Mr. Fulton: That is correct.

Mr. Howard: I understand also that it is closer to a maximum security prison, from the standpoint of the construction of it, from the walls around it and so on. I have not seen it in its present state but when I was able to visit Joyceville previously it was purely a sort of hut arrangement with temporary dormitory cells and so on and was a medium security type of institution. But by people who have visited it since then—and this is only what someone else has told me; I do not know from my own knowledge from looking at it—I have been told that it more closely approximates the penitentiary at Kingston itself rather than something less secure or less strict than that. Perhaps the minister could indicate, in so far as Joyceville is concerned, whether the entire prison—the approaches from the cell blocks or the dormitories into the workshops and so on—is all enclosed in one building and whether the courtyard is enclosed on all sides by walls and/or buildings and whether there are gun turrets, if that is what you call them, and whether there are guards in the turrets with guns or whether in that regard there is much difference between, say Kingston penitentiary and Joyceville. If there is not, and if the person who spoke to me about this matter is correct, then it would appear to me to be a misnomer to call Joyceville a medium security prison. It appears to be not anywhere near