

Adjournment Debate

statement is consistent with the pattern established by the government. The bureaucracy is top heavy even though that mitigates against the proper administration of the service that is supposed to be provided. If there is a divisional region then there has to be a division head who must have several assistants; they have executive assistants; each one of those has a secretary, and then of course there is the information office. By the time the superstructure is in place there is no foundation to carry it.

As I said earlier there is a staff of approximately 80 in Vancouver to operate the B.C. Penitentiary, the jail at Matsqui, and the minimum security system, a ratio of about one officer in Vancouver to ten inmates. What kind of stupidity is that, Mr. Speaker? If the Solicitor General is serious about a wholesome, creative, and effective penitentiary service he will rearrange the financial priorities and the administration of his department without bothering with the President of the Treasury Board. He should hire people for the penitentiary service who can do the job, and he will be able to hire them if he offers attractive salaries.

I challenge the Solicitor General to take his job seriously. Put the money where it ought to be—in the direct service of those who are directly responsible for the safe-keeping of criminals who are a hazard to society. If he were to funnel the money to the foundation rather than the superstructure we would have a penitentiary service with good morale. Staff turnover would be reduced, and we would have the kind of peace and security that the government purports to want for this country.

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here with the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Friesen) in the late show. I should like to refer to the question he asked on March 29, 1976, when he stated that 33 of the 43 members of the socialization division of the British Columbia Penitentiary resigned or transferred in 1975, and 75 per cent of the custody division are in the service less than six months.

The Commissioner of Penitentiaries advises that the socialization division of the British Columbia Penitentiary consisted of 43 members until a few months ago, when three of these members were transferred to organize the regional reception centre, Pacific region. The socialization division therefore consisted of 40 positions. During the last calendar year 15 of these became vacant through five

resignations, six transfers to other positions, three transfers on promotion, and one member deceased. Mr. Speaker, 12 of these positions have been filled and three are now vacant. Slightly more than 35 per cent have left, and not all because they were dissatisfied. The hon. member had the figure at 75 per cent.

There has been a significant reduction in the turnover of personnel during the first quarter of this year. Since the hostage-taking incident in the summer of 1975, some changes have been made in the organization of the institution. Emphasis has been placed on staff training within the institution, and a staff training officer has been appointed and provided with training facilities. It is anticipated that this change in approach to staff training will have a positive effect on staff morale, by making the staff more aware of management philosophy and concerns within the institution.

● (2210)

A new assistant director of services has been appointed to replace the former incumbent who had retired. A new assistant director of security, a person who is a staff-oriented leader, has been appointed. A new assistant director of industry was also appointed and given the task of reorganizing the industrial shops in order to provide more work and increase production. It is anticipated that these new appointees will bring a new vitality and increased stability within the institution.

The hon. member for Surrey-White Rock also stated that some 75 per cent of the custodial staff at the British Columbia Penitentiary had less than six months of service. In fact only 34 out of 187 officers employed in custody in 1975 had less than six months of service. This represents some 18 per cent of the custodial force. The staff turnover is considered normal in the province of British Columbia in this type of employment.

At this time I should like to repeat an earlier statement made by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand), that he has full confidence in the administrator of the British Columbia Penitentiary. As he said earlier in the House in answer to the oral question of the hon. member, the hon. member will probably be ready to reconsider his opinions of the British Columbia Penitentiary administration when he reads the report which it is expected will be released in the near future.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.