

Supply—Solicitor General

sociology. The basic approach to infraction of the law is one of punishment. That is the underlying principle in our criminal law. Punishment is for the crime, and it is set within the bounds of the discretion of a court. Relatively little concern is shown to the individual who may have committed a crime. Most often the punishment takes the form of a jail sentence. Despite the changes which have taken place in the last seven or eight years, the basis of our penitentiary system has been one of custody. We keep the individual locked up for the period determined by the court. With the exception of parole and amnesty, the purpose of the penitentiary system is to keep the individual in custody for the period determined by the court.

Though rehabilitation has been mentioned on a number of occasions this evening, within the penitentiary service to a great extent it is given lip service only. It is a nice word; it sounds good, but the efforts that are being directed toward accomplishing it are not as great as we should like to see. That is partly because we are stuck with the concept of custody, of keeping a person locked up for the period the court has decided, and partly because it will take time to overcome a concept that is ingrained in the whole penitentiary staff structure. The mental attitude of the personnel in penitentiaries must be reoriented to the concept of rehabilitation. Any such attempts are hampered because the penitentiaries themselves are of archaic construction. I understand that we inherited part of Kingston penitentiary at confederation, 100 years ago. Institutions such as this and institutions such as the maximum security prison of St. Vincent de Paul defy attempts at rehabilitation, except in unusual instances, where the greatest effort for rehabilitation comes from the individual inmate himself and not from the staff personnel or those connected with the penitentiary service.

Any prison that is built purely for custody, the staff of which is oriented around that concept and which has been operated in past years on the principle that inmates are to be incarcerated, denies the opportunity for rehabilitation to have full sway. Yet it is on rehabilitation that our efforts should be concentrated.

We think of people in penitentiaries learning something that will fit them for some activity after their release; but such activity is relatively minor and what is taught I submit is outdated. It is possible in the penitentiary to learn how to wash socks and launder

sheets, to sew up mail bags—if they still do that—to make chairs, sweep floors, cook, and so on. A great deal of the work done by inmates is to make the penitentiary function. Even those trades that are taught and that are geared to the traditional crafts in the construction industry, such as bricklaying, machinists trades, and so on, are needed in lesser degree, and blacksmithing, which is also taught, is not needed at all. In teaching such trades inmates are learning trades which by their very nature are becoming less and less valuable in our economy. I think that only in one penitentiary in British Columbia which I visited, as I recall, within the last few years, did I see a piece of electronic equipment. This was designed to give a few people an understanding of the working of a television system, or a television set.

● (9:50 p.m.)

The whole force of our economy at this moment lies in the field of technological advance and change. Coupled with this there is the factor of age itself. We know we are asking a great deal when we ask a person aged 45 or 50 to change his course and follow an occupation altogether different from the one in which he has been trained; and even if he does this he might find it difficult to find employers ready to employ a man in his middle years. We have geared our "learn a trade" approach in the penitentiaries to occupations which do not really provide the individuals concerned with much of a chance when they do get out.

The purpose of penitentiaries should primarily be to prepare the individual for the day when he is released. This is not being done at present, and with all respect to the desires of the individuals who are running the service, and with all respect to the intensity and sincerity of the Solicitor General I must say there are too many factors built into the system as it exists today which militate against giving this idea a fair chance.

There are hopeful signs, though, and we must take advantage of every one of them. One of the problems which confronts an inmate when he gets out is the simple question of money, or the lack of it—enough in his pocket to give him some freedom of movement so that he may locate himself in employment. I am not sure what amount of money is placed in the hands of an inmate released after a two year sentence; I think it is a minimum of \$25 or \$30. If this is so, the amount he receives is not enough in today's society to give him any real mobility. As a