

try pertaining to language and culture, and problems in respect of adopting medicare and health care as well as introducing massive changes in our tax system and in each case have appointed royal commissions to estimate the task for us, in the field of correction and penology we have not had one royal commission but three since 1938. I brought the documentation along in order to show the weight. I am sorry the visual size cannot be recorded in *Hansard*. The first is the Archambault Commission of 1938, followed by the Fauteux Commission in 1956 and recently the Ouimet Commission in 1969.

Each commission in turn provided an enormous number of recommendations. In addition, if these royal commissions were not sufficient to impress us concerning the amount of headwork that has been done, at the present time we have a subcommittee of our own House and a major committee of the other place both studying various aspects of this question. There is an unbelievable amount of information available. But I suspect the information that is available has not, in most cases, been rationally considered but that the sort of snap responses of public opinion to violent events in the news and bizarre criminal aspects have been the operational principle in terms of governmental response.

● (1710)

People are just not aware—and I include people who make up the membership of this place because I think we had a pretty clear indication in the debates which ranged over the months on capital punishment—how little time and attention we have given to the general subject of crime and punishment, and specifically in relationship to the most difficult concept of punishment, that of capital punishment. I can think of no other area of public consciousness in which we have so misled and deceived the general public as that of the relationship of crime and criminal activity to judicial decision, to rehabilitative programs and to the effective protection of society. In a general way, I think that we have been confused about the difference between morality and crime, and perhaps as a clergyman I can say that we must get our thinking straight on what we mean when we talk about crime. While we may talk about the fact that the law treats all men equally, and we can report bizarre stories about multi-millionaires and people in high-class positions being involved in crime for which eventually they are convicted and serve time, the fact of the matter is that 90 per cent of those serving time in federal institutions come out of seriously disadvantaged situations. There are so many reports on the subject that it is difficult to know from which to quote. Let me refer to the report of the Task Force on Community-Based Residential Centres submitted to the Solicitor General recently which contains the following statement in its opening paragraph on reasons or excuses:

The members of the Task Force on Community-Based Residential Centres believe that most criminal conduct is spawned in the community, contributed to by the social, economic and political circumstances of the community. Thus, criminal behaviour is a function both of the offender and of the community, and the solutions must be sought in both.

I am afraid that we have been living with a great number of delusions about the nature of crime and its

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treatment, perhaps because it has been regarded as the kind of subject you do not talk about at the dinner table with your family. Crime, after all, in the parlance of most people is sinful; you do not expose children to it or indulge, in polite or genteel society, in a discussion of the facets of criminal behaviour. We have not really considered where morality leaves off and our whole concept of capital punishment debate is a good example of our failure to deal rationally with the subject. I would say to my fellow abolitionists who participated in the debate that we did not deserve to win that vote, because during the last five year period we have done damn little to explain why we should abolish capital punishment, and why there should be other sweeping changes in our whole judicial system as well as our system of penology.

I am not a prophet, but I would say that if we do not take the opportunity over the next five year period to explain how the abolition of capital punishment, in relationship to other changes in our prison system makes sense, then I doubt very much that the House of Commons, say, in 1978, will have the public support to extend the abolition or partial abolition of capital punishment. Fundamentally, what we need to do is to alter public opinion. I think that that must begin in this place. That is why I am suggesting that we need a parliamentary committee. I think it must be a special parliamentary committee which, I hope, would comprise members of this House and the other place, and would have suitable staff as well as a large computer which would be fed all the information presently available. Then, this material would be collated in some rational and sensible way. We must have the opportunity to educate both ourselves and the general public.

I really cannot be very hard on the Solicitor General, because he is caught in a very difficult situation. On the one hand, he has the general public, represented by many members of parliament in the House, ready to jump on him the moment there is any detection of a weakening of security procedures or any bizarre crime that occurs as the result of what appears to be a change, an adjustment in the present penitentiary system. On the other hand, he has a staff,—a very mixed staff I might say—some of whom would understand a great deal more than I would about the need for sweeping reforms in the penitentiary system, but many of whom have lived inside a very punitive set up. I refer particularly to those who serve at the very personal level, those who exercise functions of guards and security officers and who have come in—and I do not hold this against any individual—with a very limited amount of training and experience. Often, they have been caught up in the confusion that exists within the internal set up of the penitentiary service.

How in heaven's name can we expect any cabinet minister to function in that kind of set up and make the necessary changes to produce the improvements that must occur in our penitentiary system? I think that can only happen as we expose the question, and expose all this information, to the general public as well as expose ourselves as members of parliament to the essential issues involved. That is why, in spite of the fact that we have a parliamentary committee in this place and one in the other place doing things in a piecemeal manner, there is a real danger in piecemeal activity. I would suggest that one of