

*Supply—Justice*

At one time I had great expectations for prospects in this field under the minister who, I had thought, was a man of great spark, great ability and great intellectual capacity. I hope that he still has all of these qualities and I hope he will emerge as a progressive, aggressive and reforming Minister of Justice. I have not yet seen evidence of that, but I am not yet prepared to say he is not capable of producing some signs of this. I hope we will soon see evidence of it.

I will not deal with the subject mentioned by the hon. member for Greenwood, except to say that had the great province of Ontario in these difficult years been headed by a man such as Mowat or Hepburn, the frail fabric of confederation would have been tattered indeed, and Premier Robarts is to be commended. I hope we can move forward in this direction after the important conference which he has called.

The clock directs me to leave my remarks in the preliminary stage, and I hope my electors will leave me here long enough to go in greater depth into some of these matters which I think are of great importance.

• (9:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Forest:** Mr. Chairman, so as not to delay the comments of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau), I shall resume my seat and put off my questions to another time.

**Mr. Ricard:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to take only a few minutes on the occasion of the consideration of the estimates of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau) to discuss a matter that is surely of local interest. Since the minister has come here after 1965, in order to help him understand the situation. I should like to say a few words on the history of the matter I wish to deal with.

I would like for a few minutes, Mr. Chairman, to entertain the house and the minister, especially, about the proposed building of a penitentiary in St. Pie de Bagot.

When the minister arrived here, this project had been cancelled and, for his information, I would like to tell him that, because of a lack of space in penitentiaries, it had been decided to build one in St. Pie de Bagot. In fact, four farms where this minimum security penitentiary was to be built, had been purchased at a total cost of \$85,000.

A survey had also been carried out on the site to ensure that the soil was appropriate for the proposed construction and that there was an adequate supply of water. Finally, all

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

arrangements had been taken. Enough water had been found on the site itself for the needs of the institution. As far as the remainder of the water needed is concerned, an understanding had been reached with the local municipal authorities which had agreed to supply it under conditions then acceptable to the department.

The plans and specifications were prepared and everything was ready to get under way. Then came the 1963 elections when we were defeated and a Liberal government took over here on parliament hill.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier was then appointed minister of justice and the first thing he deemed necessary was to reverse the previous decision and cancel the building of the said penitentiary.

That decision was surely unjustifiable, since the officials and the administrators of the Departments of Public Works and Justice had reached an agreement on the desirability of the project. That decision taken by the former minister of justice, Hon. Lionel Chevrier, represents in fact an injustice toward the people of the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, and particularly of the municipality of Saint-Pie.

With that institution hundreds of workers would have had a job. Besides, goods would have been bought in the area and services would also have been used, which would have been in the interest of the people concerned. Because of the partisan decision—I say this without fear—of the former minister of justice, Hon. Lionel Chevrier, the people of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot have been seriously discriminated against.

I strongly appeal to the minister who has all the necessary qualifications to properly assume his responsibility. I know that he wishes to act fairly and that he wants to be considered as a fair man. He has a wonderful opportunity to correct a very serious and gross injustice that the people of my riding have asked me to bring to his attention.

I know the disposition of the minister and I am sure that, when he has the opportunity to consider all the aspects of this matter, he will want, as soon as possible, to correct that injustice for which his predecessor, Hon. Lionel Chevrier is fully responsible.

[*English*]

**Mr. Fairweather:** I would be glad to yield if the minister wants to reply.