

*Penitentiary Act*

written up in this report; he has had no chance to defend himself or even have a public hearing where he could say that the charges made against him, to which I am going to refer, are false? If it is unfair to attack this gentleman certainly it is unfair to these people to be dismissed without a hearing and without an opportunity to defend themselves.

In this report the superintendent of penitentiaries even went into past complaints, things that did not affect him at all, and men were dismissed for those reasons without a chance to defend themselves. They discharged a messenger who had given eight years service, a man who simply went where the warden sent him. His father had been in that institution for fifty-two years; his uncle had been there for forty-three years. His grandfather had seen twenty-seven years service: that makes a total of one hundred and thirty years of service given by this family, but this man was discharged, and the reason given was that his education was deficient. What is the history of the case? The history, which is a proud one, shows that this charge is puerile. Two of the boys were educated as doctors; one was educated as a priest and the only girl in the family is the bursar of the Hotel Dieu, which is one of the largest institutions of its kind in our city. This boy went through public school; for eleven years he worked for the largest departmental institutions in Kingston, but now he is put out because of deficient education.

These poor fellows had no chance to defend themselves; they were given their papers and let go. This gentleman threatened them with instant dismissal if they dared go near a member of parliament with their complaints. When a man is dismissed from a public institution—and there have been forty or fifty in the last three or four months—where is he to go for redress if not to his member of parliament? Who else can take up these cases? For the last twenty years these men have been told that if they dared go near a member of parliament they would be dismissed instantly; that is the sort of thing that has been going on. I have no criticism of this man as a soldier; his record is good, but as the writer of reports on penitentiary riots certainly he has fallen down.

I had hoped that this gentleman would be fair. He knows the treatment given even a private in the army when he is charged with some misdemeanour. You cannot punish any private in the army unless you bring him before a court martial, where he can defend himself and where he will be represented by counsel. This man, however, refuses even a

[Mr. Ross.]

hearing to his discharged employees. I thought the last administration was pretty bad in its treatment of the guards, but under this gentleman this administration is even worse. After hearing about 650 convicts without being able to locate the two or three leaders in the riot, this man called in the guards and swore them to secrecy so that they would not dare tell what he questioned them about. Can any fairminded man, any British citizen in this country, imagine that sort of treatment, under which a guard is taken in and sworn to secrecy and then, three or four days later, is discharged? This is the treatment that has been given, and that is why I am protesting to-night.

This is a onesided report; it is misleading; it misrepresents and distorts the facts, and it is brutal and unfair in its treatment of these people. I am going to prove those statements. I know if the Minister of Justice or the ex-Minister of Justice had the facts before them something would be done, but as they say they must stand behind their officials. At the same time there should be some investigation if they are getting untrue reports. In this connection I might refer to a report filed here a year ago with regard to these brokers. They were supposed to be working, mixing cement, digging roads and ditches, and so on, but they did that work only after the question was asked in this house. I have a sworn statement here, which I should like to read:

When the brokers came to Collins Bay they were put on duty as waiters in the officers' mess—

I hope neither the Minister of Justice nor the ex-Minister of Justice will take this as personal; I hope they will understand that it is the truth, which was not stated in the reports furnished them.

—causing the former waiters, who were perfectly satisfactory, to lose their jobs, and as a result they were put in the "bull gangs," digging and excavating. Stobie—

I hope I will be forgiven for mentioning names, but it must come out.

—was put in the officers' mess. Forlong was made secretary to the deputy warden, Young was made secretary to the chief trade instructor while Bill Smart was secretary to the chief engineer. Shutt was found a position in the general offices. Campbell was appointed librarian to look after the library, which consisted of about twelve books, his duty being to take in and give out the said books.

Now I am going to refer to the report in general, and first I will have a word to say as to the general conclusions. As a report this is not worth the paper on which it is written. After spending three or four months hearing the stories of 650 convicts and swear-