

necessary in England. Yet I am under the impression that officials only were questioned in England. Am I right or wrong in that?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would suggest to my honourable friend that during the recess he do his duty as a member of Parliament, as I intend to do, and read that report. As I have not read it yet, I cannot answer my honourable friend. The Minister of Justice stated that he was not prepared to discuss the report, and therefore he did not ask members of the other House to pass judgment on it. He said he had read it, and, though he did not approve of all the conclusions, he acquiesced in the recommendation that a commission be appointed. He asked his colleagues to suspend their judgment on the report as a whole until next session, when it will come before Parliament in some form or other and be fully discussed.

The only part of the report which it is now sought to implement is that recommending the appointment of a commission to administer the penitentiaries. That is the single objective of the Bill before us. If the Senate decides that the measure is not opportune, it will so state. We have here an opportunity of transferring the administration of penitentiaries to a commission of three, it being understood, of course, that a certain responsibility must always devolve upon the Minister.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: After glancing over the report I have come to the conclusion that the commission took no evidence from prisoners in England. Considering the source of the evidence upon which the commissioners base their findings, I must express my surprise and regret that the Government has seen fit to take action on this report. It seems to me that the report is ridiculous and not worthy of consideration.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I can answer my honourable friend's question by reading from page 4 of the commission's report:

In addition to inspecting the prisons in the London Metropolitan Area, your commissioners examined other prisons and Borstal institutions in different parts of England. Nineteen institutions were visited, and, at each, conferences were held with the governors and members of their staffs.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: That is exactly what I said, that the commission examined officers only in England. If that procedure had been followed here, the report would have been different.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I do not know. I have not read the report.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: The commission went over to England for a joy ride and took evidence of officers only. I have been in Parliament since 1908 and never heard of anything more ridiculous than this report. I am surprised that the Minister of Justice, whom I respect very much, would give any consideration at all to the commissioners' findings and recommendations. In my opinion it is disgraceful to ask us to pass a Bill like this in the dying hours of a session.

Hon. JAMES MURDOCK: Honourable senators, I know little about penitentiaries. I have never been confined in one. But it seems to me that as the honourable senator from Nipissing (Hon. Mr. Gordon) has said he is not fully informed as to the contents of the report, it is necessary to place some extracts from it on the record. My right honourable friend the leader opposite (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen) stated that what we are concerned with here is a mere matter of administration. I do not think anyone can disagree with that. It is a matter of the administration of our penitentiaries, which are housing persons convicted of having broken laws of the country. Then my right honourable friend suggested that better wardens should be got. I do not know about that. I did hear a member of the commission say that there was one good warden. It happens that that good warden's name is Meighen. He is at New Westminster, British Columbia.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: What is the argument?

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: My right honourable friend also stated that a commission of three members would not improve matters, and he expressed himself as being opposed to any unfair treatment. I am first, last, now and all the time in agreement with him on that. But let us look at this report to see if there has been any unfairness, having regard to the rights of human beings, whether they are for the time being incarcerated in a Canadian penitentiary or running the streets free like the rest of us. All of us, I believe, want to see fair treatment given. I do not know the distinguished General Ormond. I have never met him, nor had I heard anything about him until I read some of his own statements as recorded in this document. I had never heard a single word in disparagement of his ability, his character, his courage, his intentions as a citizen of Canada—

Hon. Mr. GORDON: And now you have got only the word of convicts.