

Penitentiaries

to the increase in the general population. The general population has been increasing by about 4 per cent, but in British Columbia, for example, the penitentiary population went up by 18 per cent. The opposition put forward this motion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I am sorry, but I must interrupt the minister because his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Allmand: I thank the House. I will conclude my remarks in another two minutes. We shall continue with the inquiry to which I have referred. As I said earlier, we have already conducted some serious, in-depth studies of parole and temporary absence. But I respect the wish of the House; if hon. members wish to study those matters again, we will co-operate with them and we look forward to their recommendations. I understand that this committee of the House will study security right across the country. That is a broader and more comprehensive study. I have suggested zeroing in, with the commission I am setting up, on security problems in Quebec because the escape problem has been more intense there than elsewhere recently. We will welcome the committee's suggestions.

There are members in the House who have worked with the penitentiaries. The committee will soon learn that when you work with penitentiaries, and especially maximum security penitentiaries, you are involved with a very difficult area. The men you work with are very difficult. They were difficult on the outside and they are very difficult when they are on the inside. There are no easy solutions. I will welcome any help the committee can give. We are in a minority situation here in parliament, and opposition members will have more seats on the committee than the government side.

Mr. Nielsen: Not at all.

Mr. Allmand: Any help they can give me and the department will be greatly appreciated, whether it relates to escapes, to overpopulation, to staff morale or whatever it may be. I shall sit here this evening and listen to the suggestions which are made. Tonight our speeches are limited to 15 minutes and I have dealt with this subject as quickly as I can. However, we will be appearing before the committee on our estimates, when we will be prepared to give hon. members as much information as we can and we shall assist them as much as we can.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Morgan: May I ask the minister a question? Can he tell us whether under section 12 of the Penitentiary Act he will allow the inquiry to be a public inquiry, with all the evidence open to the public?

Mr. Allmand: I think that can be done, but my feeling is that it should be left to the discretion of the judge who

[Mr. Allmand.]

chairs the commission. Obviously, if the commission is being told about a communications system within a penitentiary, it would not be in the public interest for such information to be made public. Making it public might alert the public to aspects of security within a penitentiary. That kind of evidence would have to be given in camera.

Mr. Nielsen: They obviously know all about it already.

Mr. Allmand: I expect the hon. member to take this matter seriously. I think he realizes that there are some hearings which could not be held publicly. But the judge will be in a position to decide, independently, what can and what cannot be heard in public. Hon. members will be able to make similar decisions about their own committee. I would not be surprised if they wished some of those hearings to be private.

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, many people seem to be very surprised at the situation which has developed across our country as far as the administration of justice and the penal reform system are concerned. I do not think there is anything to be alarmed about, or at least to wonder about, because to my mind this is just the result of a new attitude which has been taken and of the new policy which has been promulgated with respect to penal reform. As we look at the situation today we find that the whole system is in a state of chaos. We can go back to the statement made in the House by the former solicitor general on October 7, 1971, when he said:

We have decided from now on to stress the rehabilitation of the individual rather than the protection of society.

We find another statement which appeared in the Vancouver *Sun* of November 15, 1972:

Pierre Emond, executive assistant to State Secretary Gérard Pelletier said, "I would not check the prison record of anyone. Most people go to prison by accident. Society is responsible for it, not them."

A great many law-abiding citizens are getting fed up with being blamed for everybody who goes to prison. They say that society has failed them, that somebody has failed them, and the result is that they have run afoul of the law and find themselves behind bars. But every man has a conscience of some kind. He knows right from wrong, as far as the broader principles of social living are concerned, and if he decides to take a contrary course and go against the accepted standards and the laws of the nation, he and he alone has to accept the responsibility and the blame for that decision. I, along with a great many others, am tired of being blamed for people being in jail.

I should like to give a brief quotation from former Judge Mulligan in *Weekend* magazine of November 25, 1972. He said:

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It is the law of the land, laid down by parliament and by the Supreme Court of Canada, that certain rules will be followed with respect to the treatment of criminals. First and foremost is the protection of society. Second, the deterrence of the particular individual from committing that particular crime again and the deterrence of others disposed to that crime, and third, the rehabilitation of the offender.

The Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) has indicated that his convictions follow something along the same lines, and