

## Allmand says people 'badly informed' about issues

By DERWIN GOWAN  
News Editor

"I will not be associated with an execution in any way," said Canadian Solicitor General Warren Allmand to a press conference at the Fredericton Press Club last Friday.

The major topics of the conference were capital punishment, law and order, gun control, and new prisons.

Allmand charged that people were "badly informed" on the capital punishment issue and further said they based their decision on an "emotional reaction".

"There is no doubt that what the country wants is protection from murder," said Allmand, "I agree with them 100 per cent there." The role of criminal law is to "protect the public," he said, but he added this should be done by "prevention" and "correction."

The penalty for murder must be greater than for any other crime, said Allmand, but the emphasis must still on rehabilitation. This will necessitate "new and better types of prisons" and "better rehabilitation programs."

However, some persons suggested a person in prison for capital murder would develop a "nothing to lose" mentality, and therefore feel free to take the lives of prison guards. Allmand said this has not happened in other countries where capital punishment has been abolished. Allmand said he did not believe the lives of prison guards would be endangered.

Allmand said polls taken on the subject often did not reflect the

true Canadian opinion, as the person answering them did not have "all the facts put before them."

He claimed persons were asked point blank whether or not they were in favour of capital punishment, the only alternatives given being the death penalty and greater criminal activity. However he said that when polls were taken giving several alternatives, capital punishment did not usually rank first.

According to Allmand, public opinion will likely come out in favour of abolition. He said he and justice minister Ron Basford were travelling the country discussing the issue. Further, he said church groups and organizations like the John Howard Society were contacting Members of Parliament and making their views known.

The Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Churches are all officially in favour of abolition, said Allmand.

Allmand added that the election of Joe Clark as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is helpful to the cause as the leaders of the three major Canadian political parties are abolitionists.

When asked about the supposed "free vote" in the House of Commons on this issue, Allmand said, "there's no way I can impose my will on Parliament." He said most members are "pretty strong" in their own ridings and could vote as they wished.

"I'd like them to vote for it but I want them to vote for it but I want them to vote freely," he said.

Speaking of Liberal Member of Parliament, Mike Landers from



Photo by Philip Wong

Solicitor General Warren Allmand said people are badly informed about capital punishment and base decisions on "emotional reaction".

Saint John, an avowed retentionist, the Solicitor General said, "We try to convince him. We don't threaten him."

On the last vote on capital punishment in Parliament, approximately 70 per cent of the Liberal members voted in favour of abolition with 30 per cent against. The result was the opposite for the Conservatives.

Murders are a fairly small percentage of crimes committed in Canada when compared to the United States, he said.

In Canada, more than half the murders committed are done with

long guns as opposed to handguns, unlike the United States. Further, they are usually done by a person who "never committed a crime before". Therefore, he suggested individuals be licensed before they be allowed to buy guns.

His would be done to "try to screen out dangerous and irresponsible individuals." This would be better than licensing every single gun, he said.

However, Allmand claimed gun control legislation was not aimed at "professional criminals," as they would get guns with or without controls.

Allmand stressed, "If you use retribution as a principle of criminal justice, you just create more crime." and said the penal system should be aimed at making an inmate "a safer individual than when they went in." When retribution is applied, inmates "become more hostile in the institutions," and this is particularly dangerous because most persons are in prison on limited sentences and will be more dangerous when released.

Therefore, Allmand said, the recent transfer of prisoners holding hostages at the British Columbia Penitentiary to Dorchester Penitentiary was not unusual. "It wasn't an extraordinary thing for us," he said.

"We transfer prisoners fairly often," said Allmand, to break up "cliques", "subcultures", or the "penitentiary underground". Also, he said, if prisoners feel threatened homosexually for example, they might be transferred upon request.

Further, Allmand said Dorchester Penitentiary had worse conditions than the one in British Columbia. However, he said, "We've decided to close both of them." The British Columbia inmates demanded to be sent to Dorchester.

The decision to close Dorchester was made several years ago, said Allmand, but there was difficulty in finding an alternate site.

He said the federal government planned on building a small maximum security institution at Dorchester which would hold a maximum of 200 prisoners, a

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## Construction could hike inflation

By DAVE SIMMS

Construction of oil and natural gas pipelines in northern Canada, said Gary Yabsley, could create "tremendous" inflationary pressures on the economy.

Yabsley, legal counsel for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (the national Eskimo brotherhood), spoke to several groups in Fredericton March 13, the final day of Native Land Settlements Week.

The 29-year-old University of New Brunswick graduate said the Inuit want the federal government to prevent companies from continuing their exploration and extraction until questions about their effect on the environment and the economy have been answered.

If extraction is continued at the present rate, he said, a pipeline would be needed in the MacKenzie River valley (including one major line and three feeders), another beginning a Keewatin and two more off Labrador.

These could be built only at high cost, he said, and this would mean "firing up" the southern economy. This increased cash flow - which would probably include the lack of restraint on the federal government's central banking policy - would continue for 10 to 15 years and exacerbate present inflation.

"Is the gas and oil worth that much at this time," he asked. "It's not going anywhere. After all, it's been there millions of years. We have to end this quick profit mentality. When Esso and Shell say they're investing in explora-

tion for the future of Canada, you can know they're investing for their own profit."

The Inuit have presented to the federal government a 60-page proposal - the product of three-years of federally-funded research - calling for preservation of 250,000 square miles where there would be no industrial development and which would be a preserve for game, payment to the Inuit of a three per cent royalty for oil exploration and extraction in the north and a guarantee that they will have a voice in the area's development.

Preservation of the game area is essential, said Yabsley, because the Inuit still rely on hunting, fishing and trapping for survival. Unchecked economic development could threaten their survival as a race.

Unlike native people in the south, there would be no food substitute if this game were killed off, he said, and the cost of importing food from the south would be in "the millions and millions of dollars."

Assistance and welfare programs are not what the Inuit need, he said, but rather they want a guarantee that their traditional life support system will continue.

"They can look after themselves without welfare," he said. "They're not asking for handouts. The Inuit are a very proud people and have survived for generations in an environment we could not survive in."

The Inuit never signed over their

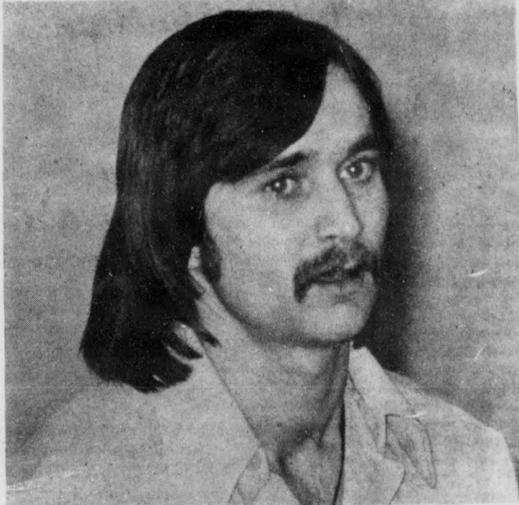
rights to their land by treaty and were never conquered, yet they are not consulted about how this land is to be used. Yabsley said it was "incomprehensible" in the Inuit mind that the land was not theirs.

They are willing to accommodate resource extraction, he said, so long as they retain the right to designate which land will be reserved to support wildlife. The money from royalties can not go to individuals, he said, since this would be contrary to the communal tradition of the Inuit.

Transition in the north is inevitable and the Inuit accept this, said Yabsley, but the rate of expansion can be slowed. To think that a wage economy can be introduced by whites is hold a misconception. Money does not mean as much in the Inuit culture as it does in industrialized societies, he said.

Expansion of technology into the north has had detrimental effects on the Inuit, he said. Alcoholism and crime have increased as a result. Health conditions he described as "atrocious" when infant mortality rates are four times that of Toronto and diseases which have been erased in the south still occur there.

Native people also suffer from poor transportation, sub-standard education ("what is the sense of an Inuit child learning European history when his own culture is being threatened with extinction?") and housing, some of which lacks foundations. Only two northern



Expansion of technology into the north has already had detrimental effects on the native peoples, according to Gary Yabsley.

communities have running water and proper sewage, he said.

The Inuit are asking for equality, he said, and are willing to give other Canadians "hundreds of millions of dollars worth of oil and gas development." Since they can not live in the south their only resort is to draw Canadians' attention to the hundreds of leases being given out by the federal northern development department the same department which administers over native people, without regard for the effects.

Indians and Metis who live in the north expect to make a similar report to the federal government with the recommendations to be ready in six months to a year.

This desire to slow the pace of expansion is the reason why the native people are making representation to the Berger commission studying the effects of MacKenzie valley development, said Yabsley.

"Things go slow in the north," Yabsley said. "The people can't adjust to the pace of the multi-national corporations - there's a lot of pressure on people to jump from a nomadic lifestyle to modern technology in one generation."

The Berger Commission's inquiry into the effects of pipeline construction will be held in Halifax May 31. Briefs may be submitted to: MacKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, Box 1338, Stn. B, Ottawa.