

increasing by ten the number of members and moreover it is suggested that two Indians, perhaps also two Esquimos as well as two ex-convicts be appointed. But why not also appoint two life convicts to complete this group? This is done in the name of equity. As regards the number of members, I do not know whether the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) found that their number was not all proportional to the population and whether he wants to be fair. Even though the board would include two Indians, two ex-convicts and so on, it would not be proportional to the population and I fail to see what those extraordinary members have to do with parole.

Besides, I have always found that the board often neutralizes the law. Today, Mr. Speaker, I am merely speaking as the man in the street because I am not a lawyer. However, people are wondering why the public at large no longer believe in justice or law. It is that after having discussed a bill for weeks and months to try to adapt it to our society, we immediately note, as we have seen today, that lengthy discussions are held to create a parallel instrument which would neutralize the effects of that legislation.

When a bill is introduced to provide security for society, it seems that every effort is made to restrict it covertly in order to eliminate all security provisions which it included. This is why 90 per cent of the people today do not believe in justice or law, because when sensible legislation is passed, everyone says: Something will happen and the security provided under the legislation will be eliminated. It is precisely what is happening today.

With respect to parole, the board should, as the hon. member who spoke before me said, discuss the case of a prisoner before the judge who sentenced him. But now, even if a jury is most cautious and a judge sentences an individual to a term of one or two years, a board can destroy all that has been done, even without asking for permission to do it. That is becoming ridiculous. So one wonders if that is not a gimmick to give even more problems to lawyers and have them fight more.

Lawyers are probably not busy enough, and still do not make enough money. That is why they are looking for work. So they have a prisoner sentenced, and that costs a lot, but it costs even more to take him out of prison so they can have him back and thus make even more money.

I have attended coroners' inquests for 30 years. I saw so many of them that I lost all faith in them. I have seen so much politics involved in courts of justice that I now call them courts of injustice.

Instead of introducing further amendments to constantly destroy the present legislation, let us rather try to have it appreciated by restoring confidence within the population and respecting sentences handed down by the courts. If the government appointed judges, it must have had confidence in them. When you appoint a jury, it is because you trust it.

I do not agree with the present jury appointment process whereby all members of a jury must be acceptable to the accused. Too often the accused accepts the members of a jury because they are favourable to him. Furthermore, we do see terrible things. That is why we must absolutely get back to the act which says that if a judge has any

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authority, this authority must be respected and not destroyed by a parallel group that pulls all sorts of strings. By doing this, we shall restore confidence among the people. I repeat that the people have no more confidence in justice.

We must try and restore that confidence and not introduce amendments such as those. Therefore, we cannot approve this amendment.

● (1540)

[*English*]

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, it is not often I intervene in debates of this kind in connection with a bill sponsored by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) but there are some points I should like to make with regard to the two amendments proposed by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard).

First, may I say I do not support the amendments. It is not that I object to what the hon. member is trying to achieve. On the contrary, I am definitely of the opinion that men and women of experience whose origin is among our native peoples could make a very effective contribution to the parole system as members of the Parole Board. What I do find objectionable is that the hon. member is seeking to impose a quantitative requirement. He says that at least two members of the board should be persons of native origin. Upon the basis of this approach, we might well prescribe minimal representation by other groups which also have an interest in the operations of the Parole Board. I do not think it accomplishes anything to say there should be a minimum of certain categories of people on any board.

Similarly, I think it would be the most unjust thing in the world to include at least two persons with criminal records, people who had served time in an institution. We hope that the records of persons who are rehabilitated are forever extinct. There is provision in other legislation that pardons can be obtained so that a man's record can be expunged completely when he has paid his debt to society. As for the hon. member's suggestion, what a way to indicate to everyone concerned that two members of the board are people who have served time. It would be like asking them to wear a badge saying they had prison records. I cannot accept this. I realise that the hon. member wishes to see on the board persons who have had experience, as it were, on the other side of the table. Well, there may be something in that idea but there is no way in which it could be implemented by passing a law saying the board should include representatives of Canadians who had served time in correctional institutions.

It seems to me that the record of the Parole Board has been unjustly attacked all too often by the hon. member for Skeena and others. The board is having an extremely difficult time attempting to cope with a situation which is, in many instances, beyond its capacity, bearing in mind that Canadian law has a predilection for throwing people into jail. It is a national characteristic in this country. There is hardly a statute carrying a sanction in which the penalty section does not say: Throw him into jail! What is the result? Naturally the consequence is an overblown prison population.