

*Supply—Solicitor General*

Therefore, we should have the necessary personnel and equipment in our penitentiaries to help them find a profession or trade which, apart from providing them with the necessary training, would bring them a hope that they might be useful to society upon their release.

In fact, those people have no hope of rehabilitation, and this brings me to the point I want to stress tonight. Since the government is introducing a bill to abolish the death penalty, I consider that it should not leave it to the humble members of this house to propose a measure to do away with judicial records, whether after two or after five years. Personally, I think that they should never be kept more than five years although, shall we say, no less than two. If the government proposed a progressive measure in this field, those who thought last year that they were voting for the maintenance of the capital punishment could very well, this year, in view of a new penitentiary policy, change their mind and support the government project.

I humbly submit that it would be offensive for the intelligence of the members to introduce a bill to abolish capital punishment without bringing forward complete and comprehensive legislation to rehabilitate prisoners in penitentiaries.

These are the few observations I wished to make, Mr. Chairman. I know that the hon. Solicitor General of Canada (Mr. Pennell) is dedicated to the abolition of capital punishment. I would like him to become converted, to come around my way of thinking in this connection—shared indeed by many hon. members—so as to introduce adequate legislation that would truly rehabilitate the prisoners in our penitentiaries.

• (9:40 p.m.)

[*English*]

**Mr. Howard:** Mr. Chairman, about eight or nine years ago I believe there was a correctional planning committee appointed which made a rather detailed report to the then minister of justice. I think perhaps the change in the attitude toward the operation of penitentiaries came at about that time and also at the time, or perhaps a little bit later, when Mr. Macleod became commissioner of penitentiaries. I think a fair amount of credit is due to the foresight of Mr. MacLeod and his staff and to the correctional planning committee for having charted a general and progressive course—when one takes that course in its historical perspective—for

[*Mr. Lachance.*]

changes in the penitentiary system, the concept of that system and its administration.

This does not mean that everything is rosy and sweet and that we do not need further progress or alterations. As the commissioner would be the first to say, changes in this field take place more slowly, perhaps, and for a variety of reasons, than changes in most other fields in which the government is involved. That is so partly because government—not this government, but any government—moves to a great extent through public pressure. The penitentiary service I am sure is subject to the least amount of pressure, probably because the public is not much concerned about the operation of penitentiaries, except at times of riots or similar circumstances when the penitentiaries are brought to the public's attention. I shall say more about that later.

I listened with great interest to the statement of the minister about criminality and the increase of it. Increased criminal activity is not confined to Canada but is taking place in other countries of the world also. This is an extremely serious matter which cannot be coped with by an evening's discussion in parliament. It involves the attitude of society and an extensive examination of it. It involves the morals and ethics of society rather than law enforcement or the like. Not long ago we were presented with a report on juvenile delinquency, which is only one aspect of the serious problem of criminality in the country, and though the report had taken a long time to prepare, and though we had examined the question in depth and made proposals, nothing stemming from the report is yet before the house in any legislative form. I suppose that this pattern must be followed in dealing with the general question the Solicitor General raised. Only so long as there is a public consciousness and desire to deal with the matter, and only so long as we can develop sufficient public concern about it, so that the Solicitor General's position in cabinet is buttressed as much as possible, have we any hope for success.

I contend what I have contended on other occasions. For a variety of reasons which I will not repeat at the moment but which I am sure the Solicitor General understands and appreciates, as do so many others, a great deal of our effort in this field must be directed to the younger people, to those in their teens. There are problems connected with the matter too, one of them running contrary perhaps to any doctrine that might be taught in any school dealing with law, penology or