

PAROLE

RELEASE OF INMATES

Hon. Azellus Denis: Honourable senators, I direct my question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Of the many important problems to be resolved in these days, according to the government, one of the most important was related to the delay of the liberation of prisoners. That was so important that it needed a special sitting of Parliament. Can the Leader of the Government tell us how many prisoners have been released on mandatory supervision since the passage of Bill C-67? I would like to know how many prisoners who were promised release on good behaviour were refused that release by the Parole Board due to the passage of that bill during the special sitting. How many of those prisoners have been refused their liberation?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, Senator Denis is asking for information that is really statistical in nature, and, according to our rules, it should be placed on the order paper in the form of a written question.

Senator Denis: I will do that.

Senator Murray: I will see what information can be released on this matter by the government.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, a question of that kind can be put in written form, but it seems to me it can also be put orally. In any event, the senator has undertaken to put the question in writing. I simply wanted to say that I do not think the question was out of order.

Senator Murray: I believe there is a rule that states quite clearly that questions of that kind should be put in written form and the information brought in in that way.

Senator Frith: Yes.

Senator Murray: As I say, such questions can be put orally, and I suppose that they can be answered orally if the minister is walking around with all of those statistics in his head, which this minister is not.

Senator Denis: Honourable senators, I felt that since a special sitting of Parliament was called to deal with that problem, and since it was so urgent, the government should know the number of prisoners who were refused release after having been promised their release on good behaviour. I thought that, since it was so important an issue that the government called for a special sitting, even if it were a written question, in a day or two we could get that information. I do not think there are hundreds of those prisoners, so it would be easy to inform the house of how many of them have been released on mandatory supervision. This is very important, because those prisoners have been promised release on mandatory supervision and, because of the passage of that bill, the Parole Board can now refuse to release them.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, the government does have this information, but the Leader of the Government in

[Senator Murray.]

the Senate does not have those figures in his head and he will undertake to obtain that information.

With regard to the exchange between the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and me, I direct his attention to rule 20A(1).

Senator Frith: I am looking at it.

Senator Murray: That rule reads:

- (1) A question described in paragraph 20(1)(a), or (b)
 - (a) that seeks statistical or other information not readily available, or
 - (b) to which an answer in writing is desired,

shall be sent in writing to the Clerk of the Senate to be placed on the Order Paper until answered.

Senator Frith: Yes, and the justification for that is that the information is not immediately available. The rule to which the Leader of the Government has referred, therefore, has to be read with rule 20(3), which reads:

- (3) If an oral question cannot be answered immediately, the senator to whom it is addressed may take the question as notice.

I think those rules have to be read together, and I think it is quite in order that the question be asked orally. It is in order for the Leader of the Government to ask the senator putting the question if he will do so in writing, but it is also open to the government leader to say that he will try to get the information.

● (1520)

[Translation]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of Her Excellency the Governor General's Speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. Michel Cogger, seconded by Hon. E. W. Barootes, moved:

That the following Address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Jeanne Sauv , a Member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit upon whom has been conferred the Canadian Forces' Decoration, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

He said: Honourable senators, before starting my speech, perhaps I may take a few moments of your time to pay special tribute to a Canadian woman who, like so many of us, decided