

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 19, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

VACANCIES

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received communications notifying me that three vacancies have occurred in the representation, namely:

Bernard Pilon, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Chambly, by decease.

J.-A. Mongrain, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Trois-Rivières, by decease.

James E. Brown, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Brant, by acceptance of an office.

Accordingly I have addressed my warrants to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of new writs of election for the said electoral districts.

sisting of Mr. Ron Haggart, Dr. Desmond Morton, Mr. William Donkin and Mr. Aubrey Golden, Q.C. This committee was given a mandate to hear the views of the inmates and to report to the Solicitor General.

This committee of citizens met with the inmates' committee throughout the night of April 16 and I received a report early on April 17.

Of the number of requests reported to me by the citizens' committee, the most significant was that the hostages would be released if it were guaranteed that no criminal or disciplinary charges were laid as a result of the disturbance and the seizure of the cell blocks. The inmates' committee was informed that the government would be unlikely to discuss any matter as long as hostages were held by the inmates.

During the early afternoon of April 16, one of the hostages was released apparently unharmed and in good health. After a series of discussions between the inmates' committee and the citizens' committee which went on sporadically during the 17th of April, no agreement could be obtained from the total inmate population as to what they wanted to request of the government.

The cell blocks and central control area had been occupied by about 500 of the 641 inmates at Kingston. No disturbances occurred at the psychiatric wing, at the hospital or in the dissociation area which had remained under the warden's control. However, very early in the morning of Sunday April 18, there were outward visible signs that internal control among the 500 inmates was deteriorating rapidly. There was apparently some sporadic fighting among these inmates.

As a result, I decided to go to Kingston penitentiary. After consultation with the penitentiary authorities on the spot, I authorized that a plan be put into effect permitting those inmates in the cell blocks who wished to do so to come out with hostages. Shortly after daylight, some 200 inmates were allowed into the courtyard and at about 7 o'clock movements of inmates to other institutions began. These movements continued throughout the day and the hostages were released gradually.

I know that hon. members and all Canadians were greatly relieved when the last hostage was released apparently unharmed and in good health at about 5.00 p.m. on April 18, 1971.

Unfortunately one inmate was killed and a number of others were injured by other inmates while they were in control of the cell blocks. We have notified their families.

• (2:10 p.m.)

I would like to make it clear that there was no use of force at any time by penitentiary guards or the Canadian Armed Forces.

The whole question of improvement of penitentiary services and methods of rehabilitation presents both

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PENITENTIARIES

KINGSTON—STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR GENERAL ON RIOT

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, on the night of April 14, inmates of Kingston penitentiary seized six prison guards as hostages, smashed windows, furniture, the cell locking devices and occupied the cell blocks and the central control area.

As a precautionary measure the warden of Kingston penitentiary requested assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces and troops were subsequently deployed to guard the perimeter of the penitentiary.

On the morning of April 15, the warden, his deputy and the regional director of the penitentiary service met with a committee of three inmates chosen as spokesmen to present grievances. Inmates requested that representatives of the press, radio and television media be permitted to attend and this was authorized.

The grievances expressed by the inmates dealt in general terms with the whole area of police, judicial and correctional systems. Only in three minor areas were complaints made against the Canadian penitentiary service itself.

The inmates' committee requested that a group of distinguished citizens be asked to hear the views of the inmates. It became clear that the hostages would not be released until the inmates had had an opportunity to meet with such a group.

A committee of five citizens was subsequently formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Martin, Q.C., con-