

of our research teams. It does mean learning how to live within the present constraints. That is a challenge all of us are facing, but I for one have a great deal of confidence in our Canadian scientists and researchers and I believe that, despite these financial restraints which have been imposed on them and other segments of the economy, they will continue contributing to the pool of knowledge which we expect and need.

PENITENTIARIES—BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR REPORT
ON SEIZING OF HOSTAGES

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, on February 19 three well known desperados in the New Westminster penitentiary managed to find themselves in a place where they could capture three hostages and hold them at bay while they entered into negotiations with federal authorities. On that day I rose in the House and asked the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) whether there were any weapons of any type involved when these hostages were seized, whether it happened during the time when the prisoners were being transferred, and what the circumstances were.

First I should like to thank the Solicitor General for his candid answer on that day at a time when he was under severe tension because the hostages were still being held at knife point in the B.C. penitentiary. However, there has been nothing said by the minister which would shed further light on this incident, and the whole case brings into question the administration of the federal penitentiary system in Canada. There are some very serious unanswered questions. I have been through that penitentiary at least twice and have seen the former security area and at one time the solitary confinement area, popularly known as "the penthouse"—an impregnable area.

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As soon as the supreme court judge issued his judgment on the matter of cruel and unusual treatment the administrator of the federal penitentiary in New Westminster almost fell over himself to remove prisoners from the maximum security area and establish a new section known as the administration segregation unit.

The first question I should like the parliamentary secretary to answer is why the administrator was in such a hurry to move those prisoners from the maximum security area to the new area which had been so recently constructed. I am very certain no court order was issued commanding the administrator to transfer them to the new unit. Who authorized him to do that, and why was he in such a hurry?

Second, when these men were known to be such desperate criminals, why were three of them in such close proximity? Why were three of them in a position to remain in the exercise area that day so that they could hold three hostages until their demands were met? Why were they all free at the same time?

I would point out to the parliamentary secretary that one of the prison guards, Mr. Crawford, opened the door for Mr. Lucas, who was one of the three men who held the 15 hostages last June. Mr. Jarvis opened the door for Mr.

Adjournment Debate

Lowe. Who opened the door for Mr. Bruce? All three desperados were free at the same time.

These questions have not been answered, Mr. Speaker. If we are to have a secure prison system why were those three men free at the same time? Where did they get the knives? Is there no security system to check knives and all the other prison utensils when prisoners finish their meal? What kind of administration allows such loose surveillance of the utensils the prisoners use?

The final question is the fundamental one. It would seem that the routine order transferring these men, or allowing them to exercise, allows only one person to exercise at a time. That seems an obvious and sensible policy, but it would appear that the routine order had been changed that day so that three of them got out at the same time. I wonder if the Solicitor General would agree to table in the House the routine order for that day so that members could see what had been done so that three men were free to exercise in the court at the same time.

We are about to debate a measure dealing with peace and security. That type of legislation becomes somewhat of a mockery if, at the same time the government puts it before us, there is sloppy administration in the prison system. How is it possible to pass further legislation in this House when the laws of the land are being violated with impunity?

I simply pose these questions to the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Speaker. Why was it that Mr. Maurice Ford, who went in to help the men for whom he was responsible, was not given support by the administration of the penitentiary when he was held at ransom? What man in his right mind is going to work in the penitentiary if he gets no more support than Mr. Ford got on that day? I think the Canadian people and the House deserve some answers about the administration of our penitentiaries by officers appointed by the Solicitor General. I would hope the Solicitor General will answer these questions so that we will see he has a responsible attitude toward the administration of justice in the land.

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Friesen) is concerned and that many of the questions he has asked tonight cannot be answered until the commission of inquiry ordered by the Commissioner of Penitentiaries has been completed.

At the time the initial question was answered the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) was able to provide some particulars, and I may be able to provide further at this time.

As a result of a judgment rendered by the hon. Justice Heald of British Columbia, changes were made in the conditions of segregation at the British Columbia penitentiary. The inmates who were involved in the recent hostage taking incident, namely, Messrs. Lucas, Bruce, and Lowe, had been transferred from the special correctional unit on the top floor of the British Columbia penitentiary to a special area isolated for the purpose of segregation, but located in the main dome area of the British Columbia penitentiary. This area was especially isolated for the purpose of holding inmates in segregation. They were accommodated in the same type of cells as provided for the rest