

Measures Against Crime

accepting a way of life dictated by circumstances. He spends 4/5th of his time looking for ways to escape.

Most are clever enough to invent evasion schemes that sometimes leave the best trained guards out on a limb. For this reason, what is needed is a well disciplined staff, constantly on the lookout. Among other various responsibilities, the people in charge of those institutions must find the most adequate means of using the different methods of rehabilitation, based on the prisoner's position, his background, his good and bad points, his abilities, his preferences. A period of observation must be very closely followed by well trained people. If the rehabilitation service is to produce the results that society can expect, a number of improvements are required, despite all the efforts to date.

There is in my view an essential factor as far as rehabilitation is concerned. That is inmate classification, inmate grouping in small units. The younger and newly admitted ones should not be allowed to remain in contact with the more hardened so they do not get to learn the tricks used by experienced criminals, to prepare while detained new procedures to fool those who enforce the peace that must be maintained in a civilized society. It seems to me this is one of the basic factors that should open a better approach to the rehabilitation exercise.

Inmate grouping in small units offers a means of noting psychological reactions between people who become familiar one with the other. The guards are in a much better position to observe them objectively, and inmates get a clearer perception of it.

Small units also are a very practical work tool when it comes to discussing a particular case. When a guard has to deal with a hundred or so people, he cannot observe and note individual behaviour. When, on the other hand, he knows a small group, he sees each person as a distinct individual. In this kind of situation he is in a better position to state the observed behaviour, to discuss its explanation and the ways to implement changes he feels are needed and useful. This may also help guards find out the nature of and rationale behind the sometimes constructive criticism of their own behaviour towards inmates. This helps them exercise a better control over themselves, to the point they sometimes can use their personal emotions to the benefit of inmates.

● (2100)

Guiding the discussion in such a way that under certain circumstances satisfactory results can be obtained, can replace to a large extent the formal study of psychological techniques many would like the guards to have. After proper schooling, the study of specific cases, added to practical experience, can become truly professional school training. Whoever heads it can give applied instruction.

I should like to say one word about the level of comfort in prisons: it is impossible to indicate, with mathematical precision, what degree of comfort should be given the prisoners. That degree cannot be set: it varies according to the society and time involved. For a prisoner, learning to live in normal comfort is an integral part of his rehabilitation. On the other hand, keeping him in an uncomfortable environment, to which scorn is at times added, can prevent him from becoming aware that he really has a chance of

[Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska).]

returning to normal life. That can be readily understood. Before going into captivity, the prisoner could resort to all sorts of pretexts to feel hated and rejected by society. During his detention, where he would be subjected to brutality, he would have a sort of proof that he is hated. So he would feel authorized to protect himself by hatred and on the first occasion he would be ready to defend himself with more boldness and personal assurance.

I believe that the inmates must have good food and enjoy facilities to maintain themselves properly. Each and every inmate must comply by health rules. In concluding, I want to say however that the inmates should not expect to enjoy all the advantages they would have if they led a normal life. Of course they are directly responsible for the restriction of their liberty and I think that we must pay more attention to their victims.

When we listen to some supporters of liberation, we tend to conclude that they pay more attention to the criminals than to their victims. We should not reverse the roles by taking into account circumstances which provoked irresponsible actions by some individuals who could not easily adjust to a normal existence.

In the summary for the Minister of Justice or second reading of Bill C-83, we find that there will be stiffer restrictions over temporary releases without escort. Also the detention period required before that privilege could be granted will be extended and the parole board rather than penitentiary authorities will be authorized to grant that privilege.

That is to prevent decisions from being taken too hastily and so avoid the presence in the community of an individual who could be a danger for the security of people who want to live peacefully in an organized society.

[English]

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): I appreciate the opportunity to address the House this evening on this very important matter, Mr. Speaker, namely, Bill C-83. Much has been said already about the controversial nature of this bill and many members have made worth-while contributions to the debate.

I was profoundly troubled at the opening of the debate on hearing the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) say that crime is under control in Canada. Surely the minister speaks in jest. Crime has been on the increase in this country for several years now, both at the highly organized level among professional gangsters and also at the street level among many of our youth aspiring toward professional criminal careers.

What is especially disturbing to Canadians though, is not only the obvious increase in the crime rate but the violence with which the increasing amount of this crime is being committed.

The government has failed miserably to deal adequately with this very serious problem. If we are to take seriously some of the speeches from the government side of the House it has not yet fully recognized that crime is indeed a very serious problem. The government, realizing it has been unable to deal with crime effectively, chooses to underplay the fact of its very existence. That is an irresponsible and rather ridiculous attitude, and it is one that is condemned by members on this side of the House.