



INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 53 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CANADIAN
PENITENTIARIES SYSTEM

An address delivered by Commissioner R.B. Gibson at the Canadian Penal Congress in Kingston, Ontario, Canada on June 21, 1949.

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity of attending this Fifth Canadian Penal Congress and of telling you something of recent developments in our Canadian Penitentiaries. I think it was a happy thought that prompted your Committee to decide to hold this Congress in the City of Kingston, for Kingston as you know, has been the site of a Canadian Penitentiary for more than a hundred years. Sometimes we are inclined to lament the antiquity of some of the facilities that we have inherited, but I think we can safely say that there is an historic tradition penologically speaking, about this City of Kingston that makes it a most appropriate place for this Congress to meet.

At your last Congress in Windsor nearly three years ago you will recall that we heard a most entertaining address from Dr. B.K. Sandwell in which he stressed the importance of convincing both ourselves and the public that penology is a profession, a worthy profession capable of making a most important contribution to the welfare of society and as much deserving of public recognition as many of the older and more established professional activities. I think that in the intervening years real progress has been made in Canada in developing that professional outlook towards prison work. Certainly in our own training courses in the Penitentiary Service we have placed great importance on that professional outlook and I think that all of you who have been actively connected with the developments in the correctional field in Canada have appreciated the changing point of view that is emerging both from the public and from participants as to the importance of a trained professional approach to the serious problems of dealing with crime and delinquency that confront society in these present days. And so I feel that this Congress of Canadians, sincerely interested in the application of sound penological principles, graced too by the presence of some of our American colleagues who have had long experience in this field, offers a real opportunity of reviewing the progress that has been made in Canada and of inspiring us to further effort, and to further development of that professional approach to the treatment of crime and criminals.

Now if we are to convince the public that the practice of penology is a real professional job we must