

The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta spoke about allowing sex deviates out on parole. I admit there were some bad cases in 1970 and 1971. There was the very bad incident of the Head case in British Columbia where a dangerous sexual offender viciously murdered a young girl, the daughter of a prison guard. Following that incident, my predecessor and those in the Solicitor General's department took some very important steps. They ruled from that point on dangerous sexual offenders would no longer be eligible for temporary absence. They also ruled that in many other categories of offences, the waiting period before being eligible for temporary absence would be extended. The temporary absence program was tightened up considerably in June or July of 1972.

The former minister appointed a three-man commission under Mr. Justice Hugessen of Montreal to study all the problems related to temporary absence and parole. They spent the better part of last year travelling throughout the country, meeting the people in penitentiaries, parole people, experts in universities, and so on. They prepared a report on temporary absence and parole. I received that report just before Christmas. The department has been working on the report. Recently I presented a document to cabinet proposing further changes to the temporary absence and parole program in line with what was contained in the Speech from the Throne. That matter was before cabinet last week and will soon be ready to put before parliament.

Parliament has now agreed to go ahead with another study on temporary absence and parole. I tried to make public the report of Mr. Justice Hugessen a few months ago. Unfortunately, it was delayed by translation and publication. It is at the Queen's Printer at the present time. It has been there for a couple of months, waiting its turn behind all the other books to be published. I am not sure when it will finally be completed, but it will be made public before the committee reports. We have taken those steps.

We have been concerned about the failures of temporary absence and parole. We know the program is not perfect. In addition, a Senate committee has been working on this matter since last year. It was set up because of the concern about failures in temporary absence and parole. The committee was first under the chairmanship of Senator Prowse, and now Senator Goldenberg, a very prominent Senator. The committee has been receiving briefs from police departments, parole officials, the John Howard Society and many other groups in this country who are concerned about parole and temporary absence.

In the short time I have held this office I have recognized the fact that there are many shortcomings. There have been shortcomings in the security system. This was made evident in recent weeks. There are shortcomings in the program. We have staff problems, and so on. Things are far from perfect and I have been trying to do something about it, as did my predecessor.

This week there was the serious escape of five prisoners from a penitentiary that was designated as super-maximum. When I was a member of the penitentiary committee of this House in 1966 we visited this super-maximum, special correctional unit. We were told that nobody would ever escape from the institution. That was shown to be

wrong this week, maybe not because of the hardware and the buildings but because of human failures. We considered those escapes to be very serious. Within 24 hours of their happening I decided to have an independent judicial inquiry under the Penitentiary Act. That inquiry has all the powers of the Inquiries Act.

Mr. Nielsen: Would the minister accept a question at this stage?

Mr. Allmand: As the hon. member knows, Mr. Speaker, I only have 15 minutes. Perhaps the hon. member could ask his question when I have completed my speech.

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I intend to make public the terms of reference of the inquiry. We were drafting them today. I went over them again tonight, but they are not completed. In general terms, this commission will look into the escapes from the special correctional unit—that is not the St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary; the St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary is nearby. The special correctional unit, which is now called the correctional development centre, is the first job it will do. The second will be to look into the Cowansville escapes, and the third will be to examine security problems in Quebec generally.

Just before entering the House I was finally able to confirm that the man I wanted to head the commission has accepted this task. He is Mr. Justice Jacques Ducros, of Montreal. He was a Crown prosecutor in Montreal and prosecuted the FLQ cases, a man whose experience was either associate deputy minister or assistant deputy minister in the Quebec department of justice, a man with a very good reputation. I have trust in him and I am confident he will get the job done for me.

The second man is Pierre Jutras, who is director of the institution in Drumheller, Alberta. Mr. Jutras is considered one of the best directors in the penitentiary service. He has had experience in both maximum and medium security institutions. He is familiar with security; he is also familiar with progressive rehabilitation programs. I have not received confirmation from the third man yet; I am approaching a man from the armed services security branch and hope I can announce his name tomorrow.

Mr. Nielsen: How can it be a judicial inquiry, then?

Mr. Allmand: It is an inquiry under Mr. Justice Ducros and it will be run according to the Inquiries Act. I don't know what else you would call it.

Mr. Nielsen: An inquiry.

Mr. Allmand: It is an inquiry under the Inquiries Act. One of our great difficulties this year has developed without any warning, the serious overpopulation of our penal institutions. In answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) today I pointed out that Dorchester penitentiary in the maritime provinces has taken in 100 new, maximum security inmates since the beginning of the year. This is a fantastic increase. I was told by the people in the penitentiary service there that an increase of this size has never before been known. Usually the increase in the penitentiary population is proportional