

*Oral Questions*

Prince Albert and ask the minister whether or not he has had any complaints in writing from the wives of officers in the Prince Albert penitentiary concerning the serious dangers that the guards face today because of the failure of the Commissioner of Penitentiaries to give them support when they are challenged by recalcitrant prisoners?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, there were some letters, but last week the Commissioner of Penitentiaries visited Prince Albert and met with the wives. He had a long discussion with them and promised to take up the complaints they put to him. He reported to me yesterday about that visit. We intend to follow up on that, but he had quite a long discussion with wives of the guards.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I have one follow-up question, Mr. Speaker. Was there a general suggestion that the penitentiary services of Canada, including Prince Albert, would be a lot better off if it were not for the fact that a political appointee is commissioner today who has no knowledge whatever and had none when he was appointed two years ago?

**Mr. Allmand:** No, Mr. Speaker. No one has made that suggestion to me except the right hon. gentleman.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege in reply to the minister because the hon. member for Skeena has already raised the matter and certainly it was dealt with in Prince Albert. If the information has not got to the minister, somebody is guarding the information from him.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Skeena.

**Mr. Lewis:** I do not have a supplementary question—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. This is why I am recognizing at this time the hon. member for Skeena on a supplementary question and a few other hon. members who have supplementaries. I will come to the hon. member for York South in a short while.

POSSIBILITY OF EXERCISE OF AMNESTY TO RELIEVE  
OVERCROWDING

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to ask the minister whether he is going to rename the special correctional unit at Laval as a halfway house, but I will not. I should like to ask the minister whether he is going to resort to that age-old technique of dealing with overcrowding in prisons by invoking amnesty upon the occasion of the visit of Her Majesty?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, that is not our intention. Since the establishment of the National Parole Board several years ago it has been our policy to release inmates under the Parole Act rather than by amnesty.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

PRISONERS TRANSFERRED FROM DORCHESTER TO ST.  
VINCENT DE PAUL—REQUEST FOR SELECT COMMITTEE  
TO EXAMINE PENAL SYSTEM

**Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Solicitor General. I wish to ask him whether, of the prisoners transferred from Dorchester following disturbances there, five of those transferred or one or more were the same individuals who escaped from the Laval institution last Sunday?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** No, Mr. Speaker, none of them were the same. The people who were transferred from Dorchester to St. Vincent de Paul were transferred to the old St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary and in particular to the former regional reception centre. The people who escaped were from the correctional development centre, which is a different institution, a super-maximum institution—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nielsen:** I have a further supplementary question for the minister. Since he was with us in the committee this morning and since the committee has reported the unanimous request of the committee to the House that a select committee be set up to inquire into the whole penal system throughout the country, will he recommend to his cabinet colleagues that that motion be acceded to by the House so that it can be brought in and passed without debate?

**Mr. Allmand:** This morning I stated that it was up to the committee to make a decision on that matter. I had decided we would have an independent judicial inquiry, which I think is the better way of dealing with it. I said that if the committee decided to set up a parliamentary inquiry I would co-operate with the inquiry, but I personally do not think it is the best way of dealing with this subject.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Obviously a number of supplementaries are being sought on this subject. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi and then complete the first round of questioning. The Chair will then recognize the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta on a supplementary question.

REPORTED ADVICE TO ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OFFICIALS  
BY POLICE THAT INMATES WHO ESCAPED WERE SPECIAL  
SECURITY RISKS

**Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi):** Mr. Speaker, were officials of the minister's department informed by officials of the Quebec Provincial Police that the five inmates who escaped from the correctional institution in Montreal last weekend were special security risks requiring extra and special surveillance?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, the first that I heard about that allegation was when I saw Mr. St. Pierre on television last night. We immediately got in touch with the Commissioner of Penitentiaries to see if the Director of the Quebec Provincial Police had passed on any such information. The commissioner was not aware of it, but he checked and this morning he told