

five years. They have accomplished it in England; as a result of the Summary Offenders Act they closed up half the prisons in England. In Canada, law reform is discussed only by the bar at its conventions, but it should be the most important work of this house in committee.

Mr. MacNICOL: I should like to ask the minister a question, following what my leader said in reference to the report upon which the minister had made suggestions a few years ago. At that time there was a good deal of talk about instituting in the penitentiaries of Canada some means of reform along the lines of the Borstal system that has shown such splendid results in England.

In speaking on the question a few years ago, I referred to my own survey of the penitentiaries of England and the fine things I saw as a result of that system. Has anything along that line been incorporated in the administration of the Canadian penitentiaries?

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): This was one of the important matters that were left for the consideration of the commission when appointed, and that is the reason why really nothing has been done. If we ever come to the conclusion that no commission should be appointed, this matter will have to be considered. But I still hope to give effect to the recommendations of the report and have the commission appointed, and that system which my hon. friend has discussed in the house on some occasions and of which I know personally he has made a special study, put into effect as far as possible.

Mr. BRUCE: I should like to suggest publicly, as I was doing privately to the Minister of Justice, that this matter of appointing commissioners, involving considerable expenditure, might very well be left over until after the war.

Second, may I say that I personally have had some experience in making a report, and although in my case the report was not approved publicly, twenty-four of my recommendations out of twenty-five were put into effect. I think, therefore, that the Minister of Justice could very well implement many of the recommendations of the report even in advance of the appointment of the commissioners.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I cannot support that point of view at all. It seems to me an oversimplification to say that the bill setting up the penitentiaries commission was purely a sop to the former member for Grey-Bruce. It is true that the former member

[Mr. Church.]

for Grey-Bruce and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) were both enthusiastic advocates of penitentiary reform. But there were hundreds of people, penologists and others interested in the penal problem in Canada, who for years had been pressing upon the government, both the former government and this one, the need for setting up a commission to institute modern methods of dealing with people who had broken the law and were in need of a new adaptation to society. We in this group were most enthusiastic when the government finally did bring down the bill to set up this commission. Whether there is a war on or not, this country can fight it efficiently and vigorously only as it has behind it a solidified state, and at the core of any state there lies its judiciary and its method of dealing with the malcontent and people who have broken the laws and have come under the punishment of the state.

No one has suggested that, as a war measure, we should reduce this huge sum being paid to judges, over \$2,000,000, or the \$300,000 being paid in pensions. If we are going to take care of one end of the law, we must also take care of the other. If we are going to spend money to try men and put them away where they can do no harm, we must also be prepared for the sake of the state to take care of these men when they come out of prison, and help them to make a proper adaptation, get back into society and play a part in the Canada that is to be when this war is over.

Someone suggested \$24,000 for salaries alone for the commission. That sum or ten times that sum, if necessary for administration and so on, will be a small amount compared with what we may pay for failing to do something about penal conditions in Canada.

I was very glad to hear the minister say that the government have no intention of discarding the bill and that they do intend to follow through with the appointment of the commission. I hope the minister will continue along that course; that it will not be long until the necessary men are found and the commission set up, so that something along the lines of the Borstal system as it has operated so successfully in England can be set up in Canada and we begin to do something for that section of our society which has been too long neglected and overlooked.

Mr. GREEN: When this item of departmental administration was up for consideration in the 1940 session, I asked the Minister of Justice if he would give consideration to the appointment of a solicitor general, to be in charge particularly of the administration of