

"dirty thirties," was as a police court and prison worker with the Salvation Army, one of the institutions which early concerned itself about penal reform and rehabilitation services for Canadian people who run afoul of the law. I remember back in the city of Toronto that one of the workers in this field was Mr. Alex Edmison, who at that time was working for the John Howard Society. He was one of the pioneers in penal reform. He has since become an outstanding authority on penal reform in Canada. Indeed, he was on the National Parole Board himself at one stage, and is now lecturing in penology at the University of Ottawa.

As I look back over the 30 or 40 years which have passed, I am encouraged to note that we have made some progress toward a more humane approach in dealing with people who find themselves in the toils of the law. It was with considerable disappointment, because of the glaring headlines over the past year or two arising from the breakdown in the administration of the parole system, that we found it necessary to try to plug the holes in this ad hoc, half-hearted way. I had hoped the government would have waited until such time as it had thoroughly reviewed the Huguessen report and received the report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs after its long deliberation on the matter, so that adequate amendments might have been brought in to the Parole Act. That will still have to wait further action on the part of this parliament, or more likely, in light of the present trend in this parliament, for another parliament to be elected by the people of Canada.

● (2130)

I suggest that in addition to the amendment brought forward by the hon. member for Skeena, we should emphasize in our parole system not only the matter of selecting candidates for parole whether it be long-term, permanent parole or short-term day parole but more adequate supervisory personnel and facilities to assist in the rehabilitation process. The essential purpose of parole is to make it possible for the offender to return to society and become re-established and rehabilitated in society at an early date outside the confines of the penal institutions. To be successful in the rehabilitation process, the first responsibility of the Parole Board is to make an accurate assessment of the rehabilitation potential of the individual concerned.

The emphasis should be on young people who are first offenders, people who are not yet in the category of recidivists that we find all too frequently, particularly in our federal institutions. In many cases these recidivists or repeaters move into the area where they are psychopaths. Regardless of the rehabilitation facilities that might be made available, it would be impossible for them to benefit from the rehabilitation system under the parole program.

With regard to our young offenders, I think it would be almost essential in the kind of society which we are operating today to have halfway houses or youth hostels such as the House of Concord in the city of Toronto. That institution is operated by the Salvation Army and deals almost exclusively with the rehabilitation of youthful offenders. All of these halfway houses or rehabilitation hostels for youthful offenders are operated by voluntary groups. When the government finally comes around to

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comprehensive amendments to the National Parole Act, I hope it will take into consideration the fact that this service is absolutely essential to the successful rehabilitation of youthful offenders.

There is one other suggestion I wish to make. There needs to be greater co-ordination and co-operation between the provincial and federal services. As far as I can see at the present time, the provincial parole service and the federal parole service operate in splendid isolation. If we are going to deal with the problem of particular needs in regional or provincial areas of Canada, this can only be accomplished by closer co-ordination between the services of these two levels of government.

The problem the amendment is trying to come to grips with, that of providing specialized services for the growing penal population of our native citizens, must take into consideration not only the special needs of natives but other ethnic groups where they predominate in certain areas, particularly in western Canada. However, this is for the future. All we have to deal with at the present time, is a bill that is responding on an emergency basis to problems that have become widespread in our parole administration over the past several months.

I am not going to refer to some of the scandalous situations that have emerged. They have been discussed many times by earlier speakers during this debate. However, I wish to emphasize that when we get this bill through and when we have the ten additional members on the Parole Board, the minister responsible for the administration of the act should try to plug some of the areas of deficiency that were mentioned during the course of the debate and make the best possible use of the additional manpower.

I refer to only two areas, the need for closer supervision and the need to deal with special regional and ethnic requirements of various areas of the country. We must always keep in mind that this bill deals only with the shadow of the substance. We will not have the kind of parole service required to meet the problems of Canada's penal institutions, as they operate in the complex society of today, until we have an act containing very substantial amendments based on the two reports, one of which is before the government and one which we hope will be in the hands of the government at an early date.

Mr. Trevor Morgan (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, at the opening of the debate today I was amazed to hear the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) make some remarks about a former minister of citizenship and immigration, the Hon. Ellen Fairclough. I would say to him that there is none so blind as he who will not see. With that I will make no further comment.

I was surprised when this bill was brought back to this House. It came in, like so many other government bills, with the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) so proud of what he was doing. He reminds me of the man who thought he was an atheist until he realized he was God. This bill falls far short of where it should be going. We are a saving nation, both in dollars and in human lives. We put the dollars in the bank, and we put the men in jail and let them stay there. We hope they do not earn interest in our society. We do not do a thing, substantially, to rehabilitate them. This is our failure in the parole system.