

Supply—Justice

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, the minister will recall the views of his colleagues and himself on the desirability of centralizing these activities in the Department of Public Works wherever possible. I recall the present Minister of Public Works insisting that the responsibility as to construction even with respect to our embassies and offices in foreign countries should be in the hands of the Department of Public Works.

I have before me the details with respect to this item as found on page 226, from which the minister no doubt has quoted. In contrast to the situation which the hon. member for Essex East mentioned as existing in the department of National Health and Welfare, it shows that there is a chief, architectural and engineering division, and that there are also four engineers and five architects.

Mr. Crestohl: Mr. Chairman, while we are discussing the use of inmate labour, will the minister tell us what safeguards are taken to see that there is no undue exploitation of such labour? Is there some system by which compensation is provided to the prisoners for various types of labour? Do they get a certain amount of time off for the work they perform, or are they paid? Is there a difference drawn between the more competent and specialized type of labour and ordinary labour? For example, there may be bricklayers, plasterers or painters who are qualified in a specialized way, or possibly even an architect who is an inmate. When such people are used are they compensated on an equal basis with all other workers, or is there additional compensation available for those who are more specialized and who create an economy for the government through the very fact that they are specialists and are more highly skilled? What system exists to extend such recognition in keeping with various levels of skill?

Mr. Fulton: There are three grades. I do not know that I can give every consideration that is taken into account in setting the grades, but generally speaking they are based on the attitude of the inmate, his industry and application to the work he asks to do, his attitude toward the staff, his attitude toward rehabilitation and so on, plus the factor of his aptitude at the particular trade.

This whole subject is one of those which fall within the scope of those referred to the correctional planning committee, who are to bring forward recommendations as to the type of rehabilitational training program or changes, modifications and advances that might be made particularly in the new types of institutions.

Mr. Woolliams: Just before this item carries I should like to direct one or two questions to the minister. I understand there has been a committee examining various sites in western Canada with a view to penitentiary construction. I might preface these remarks by saying that Alberta is the only province in the west that does not have a penitentiary.

I am interested also in the fact that in the Drumheller area two coal mines have been abandoned and the Department of Labour has declared the area a surplus labour area. There are about 300 or 400 men out of work in this area. I am interested in determining how many sites were visited by the committee, and whether or not we might have the report of that committee.

Mr. Fulton: I am sorry, but I do not have the correctional planning committee record before me. I cannot speak from the document as to exactly how many sites were visited, but I know they have inspected personally a number of sites, and I am quite sure that one member of the committee at least visited Drumheller. The committee will be returning here at the end of the month and I expect to receive, not later than the end of the year at the latest, their final report which will include recommendations as to where new institutions should be situated.

Mr. McFarlane: Before we pass this item I should like to add my recommendation to those already made for proposed construction of penitentiaries in western Canada. At the moment I am not very interested in the type of construction, but I am interested in the location. We have already established a precedent in the establishment and construction of a penitentiary at Springhill. I should like to bring to the attention of the committee the fact that the city of Fernie in my area is in a similar situation. There is no industry now in the area to take up the slack and bring back the economy of this East Kootenay area.

There are other aspects of the matter that I should like to bring to the attention of the minister. We have a very desirable community. It is well established, with good homes for the personnel which would result in considerable saving because there would be no necessity for constructing homes such as there would be if the penitentiary were located elsewhere. In addition, the city of Fernie is centrally located in that part of western Canada. At the present time the penitentiary in New Westminster is encroaching on the business and industrial area. If a penitentiary were established at Fernie