

I repeat that in my view this is the kind of situation contemplated by Standing Order 26, and I would be inclined to put the hon. member's motion and suggest a debate at eight o'clock this evening. It may be, however, that following consultation there will be agreement among hon. members to have this debate in another way at another time.

Accordingly, as authorized under the Standing Order I will hold the matter in abeyance until these consultations have taken place within the next couple of hours and make a ruling later this afternoon on the basis of whatever consultations may have taken place in the meantime.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### PENITENTIARIES

#### DORCHESTER—OVERCROWDING—ALLEGED BEATING OF PRISONER BY GUARD

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see the Solicitor General back in the House safe and sound.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An hon. Member:** He went over the wall.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I should like to direct a question to him regarding the penitentiary at Dorchester, New Brunswick, which I believe the minister visited last week. Is it correct that Dorchester penitentiary is overcrowded as a result of a big increase in the prison population during the past year? Is it also correct there are not enough beds to go around and some prisoners are being kept in what is called the hole, partially for punishment and but also partially because there is not enough room?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, Dorchester penitentiary is at capacity. When I was there last week I think they had one more space available in the entire penitentiary, and some of the inmates were in the disassociation area.

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

**An hon. Member:** That must be the guardhouse.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, the disassociation area is the hole. This extreme population problem is the result of two things. Approximately a year ago there was an excess of space in the penitentiary but there was a transfer of inmates from western Canada where at that time we had a serious population problem.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** Oh, we are good boys.

**Mr. Allmand:** They still had space available there, but since the beginning of this year they have had 100 inmates from the Maritimes enter Dorchester, which is far beyond any intake into the penitentiary in recent years.

### Oral Questions

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** Just like central Canada, they blame all their troubles on the west.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question arising from the fact that the penitentiary is overcrowded and that some inmates are being kept in the hole for reasons of overcrowding. Can the minister tell us whether he in fact examined the facilities while he was there? I know he interviewed some of the prisoners, but did he in fact examine the facilities of the institution or did he refrain from examining certain areas of the penitentiary because it was too dangerous for him to do so?

● (1420)

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to examine the facilities but the director of the penitentiary recommended that I not do so at that particular time because there was a sit-down strike going on at that time in the institution.

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

**Mr. Allmand:** I took the decision that it was more important to spend the time speaking to the men. I met with the union representatives, the inmates committee, and the officials. I might say that since I was there we have moved 24 inmates out of Dorchester to central Canada. We put 12 of those 24 in St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary.

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

**An hon. Member:** Were they hockey fans?

**Mr. Allmand:** To be precise, the 12 who were sent to St. Vincent de Paul were put in an area that was formerly used as a regional reception centre. It was vacated recently for a new regional reception centre. That space was available for these men. We were going to close that wing. The other 12 were sent to Kingston penitentiary to an area that had been closed previously but is being opened up on a temporary basis to deal with these men in the overcrowded situation.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I have one further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the minister whether it is true that a beating took place at Dorchester by a guard, not a beating of a guard but a beating by a guard of a prisoner, and that subsequently the guard was transferred to another institution? Has there been an investigation of this if in fact a beating did take place, and when will the results of that investigation be made public?

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have information with regard to a beating by a guard. There was a fight earlier in the winter between some inmates which led to some further trouble, but I will check into this. When I was there I was not made aware of a beating by a guard, but I will check into that.

#### PRINCE ALBERT—COMPLAINTS BY WIVES OF PRISON OFFICERS CONCERNING DANGERS FACED BY GUARDS

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I will go from Dorchester to