

The minister's response was totally irrelevant and only substantiated what was already known, that the upper Fraser Valley is a beautiful area in which to live. I should remind the minister of a statement which I made some time ago, that because of the proliferation of penal institutions in the Fraser Valley, residents might soon be forced out to permit the turning of the Fraser Valley into a penal colony.

Perhaps I should compliment the minister on his ability to evaluate the beauties of the area in such a short time, for he did not make himself available to questions at a meeting which was held with the mayors of the municipalities on that occasion. I would like to quote from Abbotsford, Sumas and Matsqui *News* of January 31, part of an article headed "Community Input Heard on Prisons." It reads:

Their boss, Solicitor General Jean-Jacques Blais was conspicuously absent for all but a short luncheon meeting. "He might just as well have stayed in Ottawa!" remarked DeJong, annoyed that Blais had not made himself available.

DeJong is the mayor of Matsqui. The article goes on to read:

It would have been that much better if he had heard the complaints and suggestions directly rather than through staff, he noted.

This indicates that the minister, although he was in the community, did not make himself available to the mayors for questioning and for getting some answers to the problems that were concerning him.

The next question I had hoped to pose was: what consultation took place with the local authorities before the changes were decided upon and announced? I suggest that there was very little, if any, consultation that took place. I have here a letter from James M. Murphy, the regional director general of the Canadian Penitentiary Service, the National Parole Service, to mayor Harry DeJong, under date of December 4, 1978. It starts:

An important announcement will be made shortly by the Solicitor General of Canada regarding the Canadian penitentiary service's construction program.

In order that you may be fully informed of the accommodation plans for the Pacific region, a detailed summary will be forwarded to you the moment such information is available.

The announcement was made on December 12. I am not sure when the mayor received this letter, but it would indicate that he did not have an opportunity to make inquiries or to endeavour to discover just what was involved in the proposed changes.

In this connection I have a letter from the Corporation of the District of Kent to the Solicitor General under date of January 23, of which I would like to read several paragraphs:

This letter is in reference to your December 12, 1978 announcement relating to a revised program for construction of new penitentiaries which program includes renovations and expansions of both institutions within our municipality, namely, Kent and Mountain institutions.

Shortly following your announcement, as mayor, I was contacted by a Vancouver based radio station at which time I declined comment having only heard of the news from the caller. I then contacted one of the local officials of the Canadian Penitentiary Service who promised to secure a copy of the news release for council's information.

At a meeting of the council a letter was approved to be forwarded to the Solicitor General as follows:

Adjournment Debate

That a letter be forwarded to the Solicitor General outlining council's dissatisfaction with the recent announcement regarding the construction program, pointing out the following:

1. Prior commitment to council by Canadian Penitentiary Services to discuss new developments before public announcements.
2. Impact on the community and community opinion, and
3. That not even the employees were aware of these plans, prior to the Solicitor General's announcement;

The letter went on to read:

During discussion on the resolution, it was pointed out that council had been assured by officials of your department that they would be advised of any new development to be carried out at the local institutions prior to any public announcement being made.

The commitment was not kept and they were not advised, prior to this announcement, of just what was involved. So there was no consultation, no agreements, no negotiations, no discussion on additional problems that municipalities would face upon the location or enlargement of these institutions within their borders.

The problems they want to discuss are, first, reclassification to residential assessment rates in the Matsqui case will mean a loss of \$45,000 to the municipality. Second, the need for the hospital to take care of inmates under security rather than in local hospitals where people are endangered by these individuals. Third—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

• (2210)

Mr. Roger Young (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the issues which the hon. member has raised; perhaps it will help if I give him some background on the announced changes. It is true that the revised construction program announced in early December represents a departure from previous thinking on the size of institutions. A number of important factors influenced the government's decision to build institutions with accommodation capacities ranging up to 350 to 450 inmates, according to the need of the region.

When the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) announced the government's program of economic restraint in August of last year, the Canadian Corrections Service re-examined the previous and very costly construction program. A number of factors, including the size of institutions were considered. It became clear there was no empirical evidence in support of the conclusion that smaller institutions are better able to fulfil correctional objectives than the marginally larger 450 inmate institutions. The results of several studies, both here and abroad, do not appear to indicate that size in itself is the crucial criterion.

Construction of the somewhat larger institutions affords the potential of offering a wider variety of equally high quality programs than does the construction of smaller facilities. We intend to do just this by continuing the policy of providing living units in order to allow close personal interaction between