

free exchange of plant genetic resources among countries? If not, why not?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member makes it sound as if I was present when the discussion took place. I am sure he knows full well that it was a bunch of bureaucrats who were discussing whether it would take place, at FAO, the permanent residents of Rome, as we call them. I had only been there for one week of the sessions.

We believe the exchange of seeds has taken place freely in the world, and the Hon. Member knows it. We have an organization at the present time known as the International Board of Plant Genetic Resources. We think the solution to the perceived problem should come by strengthening existing systems, not by striking out in a new and uncertain direction.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Who was the author of that?

Mr. Nielsen: You read well.

Mr. Whelan: I dictated this before I left. I wanted to make sure that both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Minister has put an adequate reply on the record.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF DR. MORENO LEON,
MINISTER OF ENERGY OF VENEZUELA

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have the honour of calling to the attention of the House the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of Dr. Moreno Leon, the Minister of Energy of Venezuela.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PENITENTIARIES

PROPOSED LOCATION OF MINIMUM SECURITY PRISON IN
MOUNT PEARL, NFLD.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. He announced in November that he would renovate a building vacated by the RCMP in Donovan's Industrial Park, to be used as a federal minimum security prison in Newfoundland. This is without the knowledge or the permission of the municipal council of Mount Pearl, and the Minister has badly upset his Newfoundland colleague from Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador who said that it is "madness and an insult to the people of Newfoundland". Also he said that it would not be done elsewhere in Canada, "certainly not in Toronto, which is Mr. Kaplan's area".

Oral Questions

In view of the anger that this issue has aroused in Mount Pearl and in the Minister's colleague, is he now in a position to announce that he is cancelling this minimum security abortion, in that he plans to put a penitentiary in an industrial park in the Town of Mount Pearl, Newfoundland?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Another penal colony.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member would be surprised to know that in Toronto there are two minimum security institutions in industrial areas of the city, upstairs from post offices as a matter of fact.

Mr. Mulroney: Oh, that is what is happening.

Mr. Nielsen: There must be one in Ottawa too.

Mr. Kaplan: Also he would be surprised to know that low security institutions with inmates who are about to be released and are not at that point considered violent or dangerous, are an asset to the communities in which they are situated. I am looking forward to being able to discuss with officials and with the local municipality the advantages and problems which sometimes arise with minimum security institutions. I assure the Hon. Member that there are dozens of reasons, and dozens of examples across the country, which will show the people in the Newfoundland area the advantages of this institution.

Also I remind him that Newfoundland has approximately 200 federal offenders in the correctional system of Canada. None of them are able to spend their period of federal incarceration in a federal institution in Newfoundland. I am very pleased to be able to provide for the establishment, for the first time, of a federal penitentiary in Newfoundland. Minimum security is the appropriate level because there are very few Newfoundlanders who are considered dangerous in the federal system—

Some Hon. Members: Except John!

Mr. Kaplan: —and are incarcerated at the level of maximum security. From a correctional point of view, from a community point of view, and from the point of view of a national Government fulfilling its responsibility to provide minimum security institutions where there is need, this is the correct decision.

Mr. Crosbie: Perhaps, if you put these people in the mail, you would not need this institution; they would simply disappear.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1200)

REQUEST THAT PENITENTIARY BE CONSTRUCTED

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, the Government treats all 560,000 Newfoundlanders as though they were offenders. Therefore, we hardly need a penitentiary for that purpose. Can the Minister assure this House that a