

tial research. If we are ever to have the kind of parole system in which we can have serious confidence we will have to expand the research facilities. If we did that we could certainly draw upon the experience of parole systems in other jurisdictions where, for example, in Great Britain the parole section of the Home Office has its own research unit and publishes the parole section of the annual report of the National Council of Crime and Delinquency. In the United States they have a National Council of Crime and Delinquency with its own research centre providing adequate information for the guidance of parole boards and parole officers in that country. I would suggest further that any attempt to reform the administration of parole in this country which does not provide for extended research facilities and staff would not begin to meet the need.

Finally, I should like to suggest that we should be doing something serious about the need for giving greater recognition to the rights of the inmates themselves. We should recognize that the due process of law should apply to all aspects of confinement in the penal institution, and when an inmate applies for parole he should not only have the right to state his case and the right to a definite decision but he should have the right to an explanation as to why his application for parole has been rejected. Admittedly, there is an argument for the present policy of the board, according to which a reason is not always given. I can recognize that giving a reason or an explanation to some inmates might cause them great distress, and I take that kind of argument very seriously. However, I would point out to the House and to the minister the opinion of a Canadian authority on this subject, Dr. Evelyn Shea of Ottawa, who, in a study called "The Future of Parole" says:

● (1610)

We believe however that the detrimental effects of withholding an explanation will, in the great majority of cases, be worse than the distress caused by knowing the reasons.

I maintain that to give an explanation would surely increase the trust that inmates might have in the penal system and in paroles.

As well, we should give consideration to inmates having a chance to appeal the decision, giving them the same rights that we would give attorneys general or other law agents who would be dissatisfied with the thinking of the board. The Hugessen report says that it has four objectives for the reorganization of the parole system in Canada. These four objectives are: one, the decentralizing of the board; two, integration of the parole system with the criminal justice continuum; three, an interlinked information system; and four, due process of law.

I think it should be clear to us all that the bill before us is inadequate on each of those counts, that it takes but one, small faltering step toward the first objective. But in terms of really reorganizing the board so that it would be adequately decentralized and most efficient in carrying out its mandate, this bill simply does not meet the need. We need further time to ask ourselves if the government should not be recommending to parliament a much more extensive reorganization than it has. Certainly, we have not had any suggestion that the minister intends a further integration of the parole system with what the Hugessen

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report calls the criminal justice continuum to safeguard society against inadequate surveillance so that there can be an avoidance of the tragic misuse of parole, evidence of which I have submitted. Certainly, we have no promise of a more effective research program and an interlinked information system, and as yet we have no suggestion that the due process of law, on behalf of the society or on behalf of the inmates, would be more greatly honoured.

This is a weak, hesitant step that the government is asking parliament to take, not because the minister has not had adequate information presented to him by most well informed sources, such as the Hugessen task force and the Senate committee as well as the experience of other jurisdictions, and not because the minister has not had adequate time to deal with the information that surely is available to him. Therefore, we say to the House and to you, Mr. Speaker, that while we are prepared to support this bill for second reading we are not prepared to go further than that today. In fact, as I look at this bill and think of the minister's exposition in support of it, I am reminded of what a father of a bride said at a wedding which I recently attended. As he looked at the groom, he said: "well, he is better than nothing". I think that is the best we can say for this bill—it is better than nothing. We know that the National Parole Board needs more members, and we know that it needs the distribution of those members across the country. We know that there was a need to abandon the back-to-back temporary absence system. We welcome all these steps, but there is so much more to be done that we are not prepared simply to give an uncritical acceptance to that which is so obviously inadequate.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, the bill we have before us is a very short one and really says very little. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. Stackhouse) who said that it travelled a very small distance toward any real change in the method of dealing with this subject. The bill contains a short explanatory note which reads:

The purpose of this bill is to effect the appointment of additional ad hoc members to the National Parole Board.

I can understand why the minister provides a short explanation. It is because whenever the minister has provided a long explanation in the House he has brought upon himself a certain amount of difficulty. But again, he has a difficult portfolio. His position is one with which members from both sides of the House have sympathy because any penal system which is 100 per cent secure and 100 per cent successful does not exist. We in Canada do not have the worst penal system in the world.

However, the purpose of this bill is to put into effect the suggestions the minister made in his statement on June 1, when he outlined certain changes that were being made to our parole and temporary absence system. Certainly, one of these changes that we in this corner of the House welcomed very much was the appointment of Miss Inger Hansen as a kind of ombudsman for the penitentiary service. This change was long overdue and we are very happy with the quality of that appointment. Nevertheless, the statement itself contained a rather inadequate approach to a big problem. I should like to quote the minister: