

*Supply—Solicitor General*

feel this is something that ought to be thoroughly investigated.

We had a very clear insight into these problems when Miss Macneill, who was formerly superintendent of the prison for women, came before the committee. She and two other ladies who had been on her staff, but who are no longer connected with the penitentiary service, unburdened themselves to the committee because they were under no pressure, under no danger of action which might be punitive. I do not say that there is, within the service, any fear of this sort of punishment, but naturally a person is not going to throw away his or her job by making unkind comments about the administrative set-up. It was quite clear to us that the prison for women has suffered because of the effort that was made to apply to the women's prison the rules of the maximum security prison for men. They just do not work out.

• (8:20 p.m.)

I say that the same thing applies to the minimum security institutions, which are surely set up on a different basis and with a somewhat different objective. Mr. J. D. Clark, the acting superintendent made a sincere effort to convince the committee that he was not too unhappy with interference from his superiors, but I do not think anybody on the committee really felt that he had made his case. Most on the committee felt that it would have been much better if the penitentiary with which he was connected were self-sustaining and operating. This is the first problem.

I wish to return to my first comment. The minister did not give details about what was planned for minimum security institutions. Granted, we have a bad situation in connection with maximum security prisons, but real progress has been made with minimum security institutions. The concept and organization of minimum security institutions is well accepted, and they are operating satisfactorily. The institutions are constantly afraid that the department's penitentiary service will veer from the good work that is being done and that there will not be support from those higher in the service or from the minister. That is without basis, I know.

The minister believes strongly in the rehabilitation that springs from minimum security institutions. I have a particular interest in Beaver Creek camp, which is near my home town, and have watched it operate since it was set up. It is well accepted in the community and well run, and the local people

[Mr. Aiken.]

had absolutely no fear or uneasiness about its being there. Few inmates walked away, and the camp has produced few recidivists; but I assume that other, similar institutions have had the same experience. Talking about Beaver Creek camp, as an example, I heard rumours that there were plans to expand it into a much larger camp, and that the authorities wanted to take advantage of the excellent land and facilities up there. Yet not many months later I heard the opposite rumour: the camp would be closed and that this was to happen in three or four years from now. When such rumours go around the institution they do not make for good esprit de corps, which is most necessary in this type of penitentiary.

Before we conclude these estimates I wish the minister would fill in the little gap he left in his introductory statement and tell us clearly that minimum security institutions are well accepted and that they will be expanded and enlarged as quickly as possible.

I have another remark to make about the penitentiaries branch of the department. Recently I had occasion to get in touch with the industrial branch of the department. I found that they are doing excellent work in preparing jobs within the institutions with which to keep inmates occupied, and from which they could learn a trade or profession while they are in the institutions. I hope that this branch of the department will be given close attention and much encouragement.

I wish to turn for a moment to the parole board. In common with the penitentiaries branch, they are performing their duties in a most sensitive area of public service. Perhaps their area of service is even more sensitive than that of the penitentiaries branch. If the board makes one error, if there is one accident, its objectives may be set back for many years. We know that this has happened in one or two instances, and that has been a tragedy. Doctor McCaldon, the psychiatrist who gives part time penitentiary service, illustrated the problem when he gave evidence before the joint committee. He stated that in one instance the parole board had been negligent in not accepting the recommendations of a psychiatrist, and a few minutes later, when speaking of another instance, he condemned the parole board for too readily accepting the opinion of a psychiatrist and social worker. When he was asked to explain the differences in his viewpoint he said, "It is just one of those things. We must press the parole board to make up its own mind."