

*Parole Act*

these young people decide they must do something about their lives, that is the time for parole.

I have not been impressed by the parole board or with its leadership. I think the board has been operating under Parkinson's Law, as have other branches of government. I would prefer the new members of these boards to be professional people rather than full-time civil servants. At least half of them might well be correctional officers with experience of the penitentiary system, people who have been closely connected with inmates of penitentiaries over a long period of time during which they have gained knowledge of all the ways in which people can be "conned", and acquired experience which enables them to sort out the sincere applicants from the confidence men. I am sure they would be useful on the board.

I should also like the minister to give some consideration to separating the board's responsibilities. I do not believe we should mix up the parole structure of our penitentiaries with the act we passed very recently which allows for wiping out the record of persons who have been living in a community and have been of good behaviour for a period in excess of five years. I think this is a field which is quite different to that of parole. I know it is classed as a pardon, but it is a pardon in a different sense.

I am sure one would have to agree that pardons should be taken out of the operation of the board and that they should be granted in a distinctly different way. This is often done by the minister at his own discretion. In that case, the machinery operates at that level rather than at the level of the parole board. In respect of the wiping out of criminal records, it is necessary that investigations be carried on in the community. An application must be made in the first instance, supported by guarantors, character witnesses, and so on. This is often upsetting to the community. I do not think it should be connected with the parole board; it should not be the responsibility of the board.

I believe we should also set up an administrative body to rule on other matters which are referred to the parole board now but are mainly in the provincial field. I refer to problems in respect of privileges taken from people, including the privilege of driving an automobile. I also refer to the many requests which come to the parole board every day asking that people have these privileges restored to them at least on a very limited basis during the course of their employment. I think those two major categories should be separated from the activities of the parole board. I do not agree with the previous speaker who believes the parole board should be totally responsible for all things which under all circumstances take place within the penitentiary service.

I remember an occasion when a senior official, not many years ago, gave consideration to a young person who had committed a brutal crime, one certainly as wanton as that mentioned by the previous speaker. Yet this young person was given the advantage of returning to school. Eventually he was allowed to attend day courses at Queen's University. He had been convicted of murder, sentenced and the sentence was commuted. However, that young person came out in four or five years and I do not imagine parliament will ever hear of him again. My guess is that there is less likelihood of his committing a second murder

[Mr. Peters.]

than there is that any average person walking on Wellington Street tonight would commit a murder.

I think we should remember that although there have been bad cases, there have been many good cases. The minister and his department, in the course of the development of the parole system, have determined that it should be made mandatory that persons convicted and sentenced to jail for murder be given a sentence of ten years. This is not something that was done by parliament; it was done by a regulation under the Penitentiary Act. Then the minister comes back to this house—the same minister—and suggests that we should also add to those ten years the right of a judge to sentence the young person to an additional ten years, making it mandatory that he remain in the penitentiary for a total of 20 years.

I believe in the abolition of the death penalty, but I seriously question whether I believe in the abolition of the death penalty if it means that a person may be placed in jail and given a mandatory sentence, under the regulations in respect of the Penitentiary Service, of 20 years. I think a much more humane sentence would be to eliminate that person, rather than keep him in jail for a mandatory 20 years. Yet that is what this minister, who professes to speak very liberally about the problems of the Penitentiary Service, would do. He has made many stirring speeches on this subject, but the facts do not bear out his words.

I suggest, in relation to the minister's demand for the establishment of an extra ten ad hoc members to join what has become a very permanent group in the parole structure, that he is only agreeing with the chairman of the parole board that it is better to have a structure of 19 senior officials than a structure of nine. If the minister is sincere in his desire to change the parole structure, then in my opinion it is his responsibility, if it is our belief that the members of the parole board should visit the penitentiaries to see and hear the people on a regular basis, to see that this provision is written into the act and that it is not a decision of Mr. Street. He should not be in a position to decide that he wants to have all the people here so that he can look at them.

I suggest to the minister that he should look at the persons who are and have been members of the parole board. I notice that one person who was probably the strongest and most capable member of the board is no longer with the board. It should be the responsibility of the minister to look into some of these matters. I suggest that in making appointments to the board, the minister should remember what I am sure many members of this House understand the parole board was originally set up to do, what it is doing today and what it has done over the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it ten o'clock?