

occupation more open to criticism than that of those in charge of penitentiaries, working all the time earnestly, satisfying nobody and being subject to criticism which is not always fair. I think I am right in saying this. But I am going to do my best, with the help of my colleagues, to find three men who will most adequately recommend themselves to our appreciation. I have a great deal of sympathy with the suggestion of the honourable member for Portneuf (Mr. Gauthier) that one of them should be a medical man. I believe that is recommended by the members of the royal commission. But as honourable members will see when the Bill is introduced, it will come into force only on proclamation. Of course we have to consolidate the Penitentiaries Act by striking out in many places the words "Minister" and "Superintendent" and replacing them by "board" or "commissioners." But the Bill in itself will mainly consist of this great change of creating a board to administer the penitentiaries.

My right honourable friend has spoken of the parole system and of the change which is suggested by the commission. I must say, without enlarging upon it, that I am inclined to agree with him that the carrying out of the recommendation in that regard will be a difficult step to take. This, however, will be considered later, and Parliament will have its say if this change is suggested in a practical way.

I do not think I have anything to add to this. When the Bill is discussed after it has been introduced, I shall be prepared to give any further information.

I thought I would give this statement, because after it was made, earnestly, sincerely, loyally, the Minister of Justice said that while he had but respect and esteem for General Ormond, the superintendent would have to disappear and be replaced by the commission. The Minister recognized the difficult situation in which General Ormond was placed, and had nothing but words of esteem for him. I have mentioned this in order to show how the Minister approached the subject. He has declared somewhere that he did not feel that he would be doing justice to himself if he failed to state that he could not properly discharge his duties if he were not granted the powers which he seeks under this Bill. For this reason he begged of Parliament to accept this legislation, the sole object of which is to confine the administration of our penitentiary system to three commissioners.

With these remarks I move the second reading of the Bill.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: Honourable senators, there is no time this session to discuss adequately the penitentiary question. Honourable members who have been here for any number of years know pretty well what I think of it now. I do not try to minimize the necessity of maintaining a sound, sensible and well thought out penological system, and I do not try to argue that what we have been

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

maintaining, and what we have to-day, is absolutely perfect. I do think our penitentiary system has been, and is, reasonably efficient, and I think there are other problems of infinitely more consequence weighing on us in Canada, which are more urgently in need of the expenditure of the time, money and controversy which have been spent in relation to those who have committed crimes against society.

I do not know what the state of psychology of the masses at this time is. It seems to be to deprecate anything in the world in the way of industry, enterprise and success; to look upon the man who does something for himself—and therefore for everybody, if he does it honestly and within the law,—and who employs others and contributes to the general betterment of humankind within the nation, as *prima facie* a public enemy. It seems to regard the man who rests lazily in the arms of the State and depends upon the public to keep him going, who does nothing and who is content to accept relief, or, still worse, who is in jail, with the tenderest and most infinite solicitude as one of the darlings of the nation. I may have exaggerated that attitude of mind; but it exists; it is everywhere. And it is that attitude which has driven the Government—I think, against its own will and judgment—to spend almost a fortune in getting the opinions of 1,860 prisoners in our penitentiaries as to whether they were properly treated, and in examining various officials, guards, and so forth, throughout the country, the assumption being that three men may make themselves experts and authorities, speaking as Jove from high Olympus, on the management of penitentiaries.

I regard the protection of society as the first object of punishment, and by far the major object. The regeneration, if possible, of the prisoner, is the second.

For two of the members of the commission, and particularly for the chairman, I have nothing but respect and high regard. So far as I can survey the field, I do not think that a better chairman could have been selected. He has had wide experience, he knows the whole of Canada well, and he has the right make-up generally to compose difficulties, to come to intelligent opinions if allowed to do so, and, were he alone, to express them. I have much regard also for Mr. Craig. I have seen little of him for many years; so perhaps I should say no more. As for the third commissioner—well, I see in the report a great deal of what I should regard as the fruit of his appointment. The less I say about him, the better.