

I am not in a position at the present time to say that the government will do everything General Gibson recommends in his report; but certainly we are very much more likely to go to that length than we are to go to the full length recommended by the Archambault commission. I am not saying that the Archambault commission report was not a valuable document and an important contribution to the cause of penal reform in Canada. But I do say that certain recommendations in it are, in my judgment, impracticable; and that the recommendations made by General Gibson in his report are for the most part at least practicable and desirable.

Mr. MacNICOL: After listening to the minister, all I can say is that I hope a great advance will be made. The minister did not say anything about the reclamation of prisoners. I have not read the report about which he has spoken, although I did read the Archambault report.

However I like to find things out for myself. I have travelled extensively to do so, and for a long time, along with many others, I have asked myself how we can reclaim the prisoners who come under the care of the federal government. I appreciate we cannot do very much for those who come under provincial care. I believe that, generally speaking, the provinces are acting in the matter; I know Ontario is. Mr. George Dunbar, the member from Ottawa in the local house at Toronto, is the minister in control of penal institutions. Last year Mr. Dunbar went to England to make a survey, and I believe that, in doing so, he covered about the same route I covered when I made my survey of British prisons, and the manner in which they deal with the reclamation of prisoners. In England and Scotland they use the Borstal system, and the institutions over there using that system are increasing in number because of the beneficial results obtained.

Apparently, however, unless we can use it in connection with the young offenders who are sent to our penitentiaries for major crimes, we cannot carry out that system in the federal field. But I do not see why we cannot. I am one who believes that many serious crimes are committed without any intention on the part of the young men concerned to commit crime. Perhaps a young man may have some twist in his mentality; I believe a considerable percentage of young folk may not be 100 per cent mentally competent. I do not mean that they are crazy; but there is something wrong with them which prompts them to do something they ought not to do. Perhaps, instead of being incarcerated with hardened criminals who—and I agree

[Mr. Ilesley.]

with the hon. member for Temiscouata—might be beyond redemption, these young men could be reclaimed.

Will the new board have authority to introduce reclamation methods in federal penitentiaries for first offenders? Surely they can go that far. Surely we can reclaim those young men, just as they do it in England, although, in England it is all under one government.

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes.

Mr. MacNICOL: And they have an easier system under which to work. With our federal government and the nine provinces it becomes more difficult. But can we not introduce something along the lines of the Borstal reclamation programme for the benefit of first offenders in federal penitentiaries? Perhaps the minister has not had time to give the matter all the thought he would like to give it. I have given it thought for a long time, and have made a careful survey. I am one who believes that a goodly percentage of first offenders in federal penitentiaries could be reclaimed. Will the government's programme include the reclamation of first offenders?

Mr. ILSLEY: I have read a number of speeches which have been made in the house through the years about penal reform, and I remember in particular the substance of a sentence used by the hon. member for Spadina in one of his speeches, where he said that the three principles which ought to be observed are classification, segregation and after care. If hon. members will look at General Gibson's report they will see that he is fully aware of the importance of classification, segregation and after care, and that he has recommendations to make under each of those headings, although perhaps he does not use those exact terms. Some progress has already been made.

I do not know that I want this evening to go into a discussion of methods of dealing with prisoners, because the principle of the bill is a very simple one. It is a step which must be taken to set up the organization to deal with the problem. At a later stage I shall be prepared to discuss the Borstal system, and how far it is possible for the dominion government to do anything in the application of that system here in Canada. The whole problem is complicated by the division of responsibility between the federal and provincial governments, but probably it will not be impossible to apply certain features of the Borstal system, even in connection with some federal institutions.

It must be borne in mind that the Borstal system is not a penitentiaries system at all.