

PENITENTIARIES

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON LEVEL OF ABSENTEEISM FOR THOSE ISSUED DAY PASSES

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General which has reference to peace and security and, particularly, safety for society. It is based on a new report that in respect of day passes there appears to be an absenteeism level of approximately one-third. In light of that report, whether it is correct or incorrect as to the percentage, would the minister be prepared to give a full statement on motions covering the details of absenteeism, the action that is being taken on recommendations to tighten up the system rather than have it like a sieve?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I do not know to what report the hon. member is referring. The report I have in respect of temporary absence passes is that last year they were 98 per cent to 99 per cent successful.

SUGGESTION COURT ORDER BE OBTAINED BEFORE GRANTING DAY PASS TO CONVICTED MURDERERS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, it was in the newspaper. Perhaps the minister would be prepared to answer this question as it is a serious one. As Bill C-84 deals with first degree murder and provides that even convicted murderers can get day passes with escorts on humanitarian grounds, and this is the law as it now stands, will the Solicitor General not agree, in view of the serious situation we dealt with in the committee and in the House, that under any circumstances, whether they are humanitarian or otherwise, when a person has been convicted of capital murder and given a life sentence, either through commutation as it exists today or under the law, there must be an order of a superior court before granting such leave? I do not think this would inconvenience anyone and would certainly provide the element of safety the public is looking for at the present time?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-84 provides that no day parole or temporary absence without escort can be granted until three years before the full eligibility date for parole. That means that for first degree murder there can be no unescorted absence until after 22 years, and for second degree murder until after seven years. If the date of full eligibility is changed by three judges of the court, as provided in the legislation, then there would be eligibility for day passes three years before the end of the eligibility date. These are very strict provisions and, at the moment, that is all we are considering.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the minister is deliberately doing this, or perhaps he is misunderstanding my question. He has answered it in one form. Let me put this specific question to him. Under Bill C-84, and this is as the law now exists, a person convicted of first degree murder may be released on a day pass with an escort. Putting aside the 15-year rule, and that is a beautiful thing to throw in as it confuses the issue, under the present circumstances will the minister not agree that

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under no circumstances when a person is given 25 years or life for first degree murder, whether it is of a police officer or as a result of a planned and premeditated act, shall the person be released before obtaining a judge's order, because we know how wishy-washy humanitarian grounds can be, and in this regard you just have to check the Geoffroy case?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, this is the first time the hon. member has made that suggestion to me. I will look at it, but I must say I cannot agree with his statement that the great majority of escorted temporary absences are not being carried out successfully. They are being carried out in accordance with the Penitentiary Act. This is a new proposal and we will look at it.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISLEADING STATEMENTS IN ADVERTISEMENTS PUBLISHED BY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. A. C. Abbott (Mississauga): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, I wish to address my question to the Prime Minister. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the advertisement of the Minister of Transport. There also appears today a full page advertisement in the *Globe and Mail* sponsored by a so-called "Voice of Canada" concerning the present pilots' strike. Considering we are in the midst of a national emergency, and considering that this advertisement is riddled with vicious, false and misleading statements, is there no lawful method by which those persons sponsoring such an ad can be held legally responsible for such misleading statements?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would have to consult with the Minister of Justice to see if such an ad would fall under the heading of mischief or some other criminal offence. I think the existence of the ad indicates very clearly that this country is in very serious danger of being divided on as basic an issue as has ever divided the country in the past 34 years. I would hope that all parties in parliament and everyone in the country—

An hon. Member: The chickens come home to roost.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all hon. members that the question as put has a rather narrow scope, namely, the legal responsibility concerning statements in the ad, and I wonder if the Prime Minister would confine himself to that answer.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I repeat that I will consult with the Minister of Justice on this. I am somewhat disturbed by the remarks of the opposition. I was not trying to divide this House, I was trying to appeal to everybody, to every member of this House to talk to the country in the