

*Oral Questions*

honour which we feel in Canada at the presence among us this week of a very distinguished visitor who is presently in our gallery. I refer to the distinguished president of the Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency President Suharto.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### PENITENTIARIES

#### METHOD OF ACHIEVING IMPROVED SECURITY IN VIEW OF REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General who, following the killing of a prison guard early in the week, said "I agree something has to be done. We cannot tolerate our correctional officers being attacked like this." While he was promising the guards improved security within the prisons, did the Solicitor General explain to them how he was going to achieve this when about \$11.5 million is being cut from his spending estimates with regard to additional prison staff?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, some of the matters we wanted to deal with right away were a tightening of the procedures for taking prisoners on escort and for internal security within the prisons. As I pointed out last week, in the past two years we did a lot to improve perimeter security. Escapes were cut back by about 66 per cent. We would now like to make a major effort in the area of internal security and for security of escorts. The sums being cut, which were referred to by the hon. gentleman, are for the most part for new institutions, I think two. However, we are still going ahead with other maximum security institutions. They are not affected by the budget.

**Mr. Stanfield:** It has been reported that the Solicitor General promised he would increase prison security and probably hire more guards. Is that a correct statement or is it correct that, as reported by the President of the Treasury Board, estimates for staff in penitentiaries will in fact be cut by some \$3.6 million?

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, there is provision for an increase in staff for next year and the year after. I will have further discussions with the government as to whether we will increase that still further. Treasury Board and the government have already approved of increases, but there may be areas where we will have to increase still further.

#### REASON FOR FAILURE TO PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INSTITUTIONS

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Will the Prime Minister indicate to the House where the truth lies. Are the estimates in fact being cut back, as the President of the Treasury Board suggests, or is this still an

[Mr. Speaker.]

open question, as the Solicitor General suggests? Is it correct, as the Solicitor General says, that the government cannot go ahead with the necessary new penitentiaries because communities are objecting to them, or is it correct as the President of the Treasury Board indicates that the government has cut back on the estimates for the building of new penal institutions?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** My understanding, and I believe it was conveyed in the answer given by the Solicitor General, is that some of the new institutions are to proceed and that they have been budgeted for. The cutbacks by the President of the Treasury Board are cuts in spending which had previously been agreed upon and upon which the Solicitor General was planning. We are now telling him he is not to increase expenditure at the rate he planned to increase it.

**An hon. Member:** Why?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Some one asked why. It is because the budget contained a specific pledge that we would cut down spending in many areas—reduce the rate of growth in the public service. We thought this was an approach that had the support of the House and of the country in general.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trudeau:** Members opposite will have to co-operate with the government; when they suggest the government is spending too much they should not express shock and concern when the government cuts down some of the expenditure.

#### COMPATIBILITY OF OFFER OF SUPPORT TO PRISON GUARDS BY SOLICITOR GENERAL WITH REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES

**Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley):** My question is directed to the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister think the assurance given to the guards on Sunday that he is going to give them full support, followed by the unprecedented walkout from the penitentiary system on Monday, is compatible with the statement of the President of the Treasury Board on Wednesday that dollar support is to be cut back?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** As I pointed out earlier, the Treasury Board has approved of increases in personnel for the penitentiary service next year and the year after. The cutback has been with respect to two institutions, but we are still going ahead with several other institutions. I do not think the cutbacks will affect the security of the staff on the inside of our prisons. I will try to make sure that whatever the cuts have been they are in areas which will not affect security.