

prisoners on that tier were forced to strip, to lie down on the floors of their cells and put their arms through the cell bars; their hands were handcuffed together and they were repeatedly gassed and beaten. That is a serious allegation, one which has been made by a number of prisoners who were on that tier and substantiated independently by many of the prisoners who have since been segregated. There have been allegations that prisoners were dragged naked by prison guards downstairs, one guard holding one leg, another guard holding the other leg and a third guard kicking the head of the prisoner. These are serious allegations. With the history of problems at Dorchester institution, with the history of escapes, deaths and allegations of violence, with a history of allegations of destruction of personal property, what more does it take to get the government to move, to get the government to say, "Yes, we want to clear the cloud. We want to remove the cloud that now hangs over that institution."

I met with the guards' union, with the acting warden and with the prisoners there. I found that the guards' union is as concerned as anyone else about all of them being under this cloud now. The rule of law does not stop at the prison gate in this country. The rule of law must surely apply throughout this land. If there has been criminal wrongdoing, those persons who are responsible should be brought to task and disciplined or they should be brought before a court of law, while those who are innocent should not be made to suffer as a result of allegations that have been made against all of them. The Solicitor General assured the House on October 14 of this year that the in-house report of the inspector general would be made public when it was completed. We await that report with interest. But there must be more, there must be a full judicial inquiry into all the recent circumstances at the Dorchester institution.

I see that my time is coming to an end and I would just like to reiterate that I hope the support which the Liberal party gave to this motion last year, worded in an identical fashion, will not change today, and I hope that if there is some suggestion it will change, whoever speaks on behalf of the Liberal party will tell the House and the Canadian people how conditions have improved from November of last year to November of this year in such a way as to warrant the rejection of this reasonable motion now. As I said before, a crisis existed in 1977 in the Canadian penitentiary system and a crisis exists today in that system. It is incumbent, therefore, that a full and careful examination of the recommendations by the subcommittee on penitentiaries of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs be carried out and, in addition, that there be a full judicial inquiry into the recent tragic events at Dorchester Penitentiary.

Mr. David Weatherhead (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak today on the motion of the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) because I believe that the penitentiary system must respond to two fundamental concerns. The first concern is reform of the behaviour of the individual inmate which has led him to prison. The second concern is the security of the individual, both inside and

outside the prison walls. If, following the process of law, society is to deprive a person of his liberty, there must be a solid guarantee that while in prison he will not be subject to the jungle justice of fellow inmates or to arbitrary justice meted out by his keepers.

● (1620)

I consider it astounding that prisons in a modern civilization cannot fully protect their wards from violence. Just as astounding, however, is the fact that prison guards and administrators are subjected to similar forms of violence. It is a tragedy that violence has almost become an accepted norm in any occupation, and it is doubly tragic that the most exposed persons in this regard are those charged with the responsibility of protecting society.

Acceptance of certain aspects of the MacGuigan report will go a long way in bringing stability to Canada's penitentiary system, and in many cases this has been done. The recommendations of the MacGuigan report came as a result of the considerable work done by that committee. It probed the conditions of 24 institutions across Canada and outside of Canada. It interviewed or received the submissions of 2,000 persons interested in prison life. After all this work, 40 of the 65 recommendations are now fully operational in the prison system of Canada and 16 more will be implemented over a longer period of time. Four detailed reports have been issued by solicitors general since that time describing the status of these recommendations up to the present moment.

In many ways the MacGuigan report represents a giant step in the evolution of correctional institutions in Canada. Paragraphs 29 to 81 of the report outline the history of prisons in Canada and the conditions which led to the system of today. I feel it is important to understand this history in order to appreciate the progress we have made to this particular point. Formerly it was felt sufficient to inflict simple punishment on the offender. Guards were there to ensure that prisoners did not enjoy the simplest of freedoms. Both groups were brutalized by the process and it is easy to see that violence was the simplest way to take out the frustration that such a system bred.

The MacGuigan report followed numerous examples of violence in penitentiaries in Canada. It seemed that there was a geometric increase in the number of these incidents in the early 1970s. Something had to be done. Penitentiary reform in a contemporary society is a large and onerous task. It must satisfy conflicting demands. Some seek more stringent control of inmates, seeing them as incorrigible societal misfits. Others would shift the blame for criminal behaviour to society itself, claiming that upbringing, economic status and education are responsible for crime. The reality lies very much in between, and the subcommittee recognized this when it indicated:

Even with today's advanced knowledge of human behaviour and human need, we still rely on harsh punishment, while knowing it is more dangerous and costly than humane, constructive prisons and alternative sentencing... Correctional programs are futile and wasteful if normalcy is not basic to them... If the inmate is not trained and experienced in that free world to which he or she must