

Supply—Solicitor General

people in the penitentiary service who are anxious to see progress. At the same time there is obviously a constant struggle in that service over the direction of rehabilitative measures. I suggest that the minister and the commissioner must bring to bear their whole weight to remove or transfer those who are not willing to comply with policy directions.

These people are not easy to find and are not easy to transfer. However, the hearings the committee had indicate what everybody knows, that this core does exist and has to be dealt with. Now, I do not say by any means that the attitude of some of these people I am calling the "hard core" is entirely wrong. They have been in the service for many years. They have been disappointed many times. If they are on the lower or custodial level they have perhaps seen efforts on many occasions to improve the situation of prisoners only to find within a short time that a riot of some sort has broken out or individual prisoners upon whom they have been relying have let them down. Eventually there is a return, full cycle, to the position that this is all a waste of time.

Mr. Olson: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but in view of the fact that the Security Council of the United Nations has, within the past hour, unanimously passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the Middle East, I wonder if the committee would be disposed to rise, report progress, and provide an opportunity for the government to revert to motions so a statement could be made on this matter.

Mr. Pennell: Mr. Chairman, the information I have received on this situation is very meager indeed. I have in mind now the statement which I believe the Prime Minister made earlier today indicating that it might be acceptable to the house, if circumstances warranted, that the estimates of the Department of External Affairs be called tomorrow. Having regard to both of these points I would, with great respect, request we continue with the business presently before the committee.

Mr. Olson: I believe the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs also said earlier today that if the security council came to a decision and there was something to report, a report would be made to the house. I am not sure whether they said immediately, but certainly with all possible dispatch.

Mr. Pennell: I appreciate the point raised by the hon. member transcends in importance the business now before the committee, but at this time I do not believe I could be very helpful to the committee. Perhaps I could make inquiries and later on this evening, if the information brought to my attention indicates it would be helpful to make a report to the house, I could give consideration to the proposal put forward by the hon. member.

Mr. Aiken: I should like now to turn to the question of minimum security institutions, Mr. Chairman. This is the one group of institutions that the minister passed over in his otherwise comprehensive review this afternoon. In outlining the program for this year, he mentioned the medium security institution at Cowansville, three more medium institutions for young people, the two maximum security institutions which the committee was considering and the institution for females in eastern Canada. I hope that the oversight was merely that, and not an indication that the minimum security program is not going forward with maximum speed. This is one of the fears of the people in the minimum security field, that gradually the program which was begun some years ago will not be carried to its completion.

The problem of immediate concern is the same as that which related to the women's prison, in that there is a regional headquarters which intervenes and, in many cases, sets up the program and internal management of the minimum security institution from outside. I say that this is absolutely wrong. I think there is too much programming, that there are too many regulations and too many rules; prisoners have to be cleared through the penitentiary service at Kingston or some other regional area. There are too many returns of prisoners to be discharged, and so forth. This is one of the weaknesses that became very clear in our study of the prison for women.

I feel that minimum security institutions suffer from the same problem. I think it is absolute nonsense for several institutions, set up presumably on a different approach, to be operated internally from beyond the institution. I think there is no harm whatever in these institutions being provided centrally with food and supply services, but to set up regulations which are applicable to all institutions—and this appears to have happened—is not good policy, and it is not working out. I