

My purpose in visiting the penitentiary was to gain information and to try to point out two things to this government and the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand). First, we must declare an all-out war on heroin traffickers because it is becoming an extremely serious problem in this country. People in the eastern part of the country do not realize this as much as we do in British Columbia, because the fact is that well in excess of 50 per cent of all heroin addicts are in the province of British Columbia and they are growing in number.

In our province 13 and 14-year old girls are prostituting themselves. Mr. Speaker, that is not an exaggeration; it is happening in our province. It is becoming a serious problem. We must declare war on this problem. We used the War Measures Act in the province of Quebec to quell the FLQ. The heroin problem in British Columbia is more serious than that was. It is undermining our whole system and society in that area. I ask that the Solicitor General consider setting up a board of inquiry to ascertain from the RCMP drug squad what weapons they need in their hands, how much money they need in order to stop heroin traffickers operating in this country and filling our jails.

During my trip to the B.C. pen I said that some RCMP officers are dealing in drugs. That is a fact. I was in no way trying to attack the RCMP. That is the fact and we have to live with it. The RCMP is so understaffed in respect of drug squad investigation that some members have become involved with the criminals and have been arrested and charged. They have their own system of security, and we are catching them. We shall not solve this problem until we increase the staff of the RCMP, improve their financial position and make a concerted effort to arrest the heroin traffickers.

● (1440)

Another purpose of the visit to the B.C. penitentiary was to discuss security both inside and outside the institution, since we had heard rumours from people working at the penitentiary, and from inmates out on weekend passes, that things were in bad shape. We found that the security staff of the penitentiary is set at a maximum of 147 men. The Department of the Solicitor General has approved in principle an increase to 170. This number, the warden told us, would be sufficient to ensure good security not only for the inmates but for the public. I then asked the warden how many men were on duty at that moment. He replied that a maximum number of 115 were available for duty at any one time. What is the sense, then, of increasing the maximum number of staff to 170 if you can only get 115 people to work at any one time?

About a year ago, the Solicitor General told the House that he would make sure there were guards in the four towers of the British Columbia penitentiary 24 hours a day to see that people were protected from escapees and to prevent the underworld sneaking up at night, and, among other things, throwing tennis balls over the walls as a means of delivering drugs, as has happened on a number of occasions. What did I find, Mr. Speaker? I found that between midnight and 8 a.m. there were only 12 men on duty for security purposes, in an institution which is overcrowded, with 500 people. I also found that there are no guards in the towers. The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) was chastising me the other day for

The Address—Mr. Reynolds

giving out that kind of information, suggesting it could incite a riot. But the hon. lady must realize that the inmates already have information about these things. They know what is going on in every penitentiary every day of the week. They have a system which is better than our Post Office.

An hon. Member: That would not be difficult.

Mr. Reynolds: I was told that two weeks before my visit a caché of drugs had been left in the garden in front of the penitentiary. This is possible, because people can sneak up at night and leave things where inmates can recover them during the day. Along with this caché which, fortunately, was discovered by the guards was a note saying, "Sorry we did not have time to break this down into caps. Hope we shall do better next time." Not long ago another package was found buried in the garden. This time the drug had been broken down into caps and an accompanying note listed the names of the 12 men to whom it was to be delivered. That is certainly better service than I get from the Post Office.

This is a serious matter. People will ask, "What can we do about it?" One thing we could do would be to increase the salaries paid to guards in the penitentiary service. I ask any hon. member who has the time to do so to check these salaries. The starting salary of a guard in the British Columbia penitentiary is \$7,522.89 a year. This represents a take-home pay of \$205 every two weeks. In the province of British Columbia, in New Westminster where this prison is situated, a 2-bedroom apartment costs \$285 a month to rent. How can we expect proper security inside our institutions if we fail to pay these people properly? It is a very tough job. I do not know anyone in this chamber who would want to do such a job. How can one expect morale to be high when the government is prepared to give grainworkers an increase of 61 per cent but will not give the prison guards 6 or 7 per cent?

The Solicitor General should be taking steps now to increase the salary level of these guards. I will give him credit in some areas but in others the bureaucracy in his department does not realize what it is doing. For example, it was decided to increase recreational facilities for the benefit of the inmates and provide better qualified people to instruct them. Four experts were hired for the B.C. penitentiary, each of them holding a degree in physical education. They are paid between \$13,000 and \$16,000 a year. These instructors took over from guards who were previously called recreation officers, guards who were making a maximum of \$10,000, because that is the maximum salary payable after five years. To be more precise, after five years a guard can be making \$10,269.

One can imagine the effect on the morale of these men when I say that the new employees had to keep one of the old guards back on the job because the experts did not know how to treat the inmates or how to get along with them. The thinking of the department was: We cannot increase the salary level of the officers, but we can set up a new classification and bring in new people. Perhaps this explains why, out of a total of 118 people available for duty at one time, 70 per cent have less than one year's service. What kind of help are we giving the men we are