

Penitentiaries

penitentiary who apparently is no longer a warden. We do not know why he made these statements and we do not have an opportunity to question him. I think the response of the hon. member was a cowardly one to the petition he received. I think that rather than quote one or two sentences he should go to the jails, talk to the prisoners and guards and find out how difficult the situation is. He should go into the courts and find out what the courts are doing, because that, unfortunately, has been the failure of many people who consider themselves leaders of society but do not bother to find out what the situation really is and how difficult the problem is.

● (2130)

Probably the most notorious case where a mistake was made in the past occurred in Sarnia. One gets the impression that no mistakes have ever been made in the past, but "Red" Ryan fooled a lot of people. Every one thought he had been rehabilitated. He did all the things that had been asked of him by the padre in the prison and the people who were supervising, so they let him out. But it was not too long before he held up a liquor store and killed a policeman. I suggest that that crime got so much publicity that it had the effect of setting back for many years the rehabilitation process for prisoners. If we focus on that kind of dramatic incident, as I am afraid the opposition party seems to be doing tonight, we will be doing a grave disservice not only to those whom we are trying to rehabilitate but to Canadian society in general.

We are not to blame. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East said we are taking the attitude that society is to blame. We say that no individual has to accept the major portion of that responsibility. But there are some members of our community who have to bear responsibility and who turn the other cheek or do not look at what the situation. They create such an environment that an individual finds the only outlet he has, in effect, is to lash out at society and go to prison. Canadian society says: Let us give this man or woman another chance.

I agree with the leader of the NDP (Mr. Lewis) when he chastised the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds). Let the judge make the decision; he should make the determination. The judge is concerned with whether the individual is guilty or innocent of a particular crime, and then he has to make a judgment. On what does he base his judgment? He turns to the social worker and the probation officer to find out what kind of sentence the particular individual should receive. I suggest we should let the judge make the decision.

The hon. member suggested that we should go straight to the police and forget about the judge, and if the man is guilty that is the end of it. That would be a retrograde step. I do not think the hon. member recognizes this, but that is what it would be. He seems to be trying to have it both ways, and you cannot have it both ways. You cannot talk about rehabilitation of the criminal element in our society, the toughest and most dangerous people, and then expect that there will be no mistakes. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East wants a lead pipe guarantee. I suggest, with respect, that that cannot be done with people in our community who have already broken the law. There are going to be some mistakes, there have been some mistakes and there will be some in the future.

[Mr. Cullen.]

The Solicitor General made one of his best speeches. He presented the situation very cogently. I hope the hon. member for Fraser Valley East will have a few hundred copies of that speech printed and will send them back to the people who signed the petition to which he referred. He should not just climb on their bandwagon and say to them, "You are right; we have to do something about this." He should at least give the other side of the issue. He should take a strong and courageous approach, and not climb on the bandwagon of those 650 people. Let him send them the speech of the Solicitor General.

The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta is already calling for resignations and naming names. I suggest that he is prejudging the issue. I wonder why he wants to support this motion at all. He has already made up his mind. He has made his determination that we must have the study. I think that, also, is the wrong approach. We have a good penitentiary service and a good parole system, but no one has ever suggested it is perfect. We know that mistakes have been made and will be made in the future. However, we have an obligation not to give the impression that criminals are running all over the country and that we are in a dangerous situation.

I think the tendency of those who are criticizing the system today is that they are highlighting what the press is bringing out, the dramatic incidents and mistakes. I suggest to the hon. member for Fraser Valley East and others who are criticizing the system, that when they send copies of the Solicitor General's speech they should also send some of the statistics that we have heard, such as that there has been an 82 per cent rate of success. We also heard the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) indicate the success that has been enjoyed by an individual who was a dangerous man in a maximum security prison and who later helped some 900 ex-convicts. This is the kind of person we want to get back into society. We want to rehabilitate them and get them to support the community. We hope they will help us with our penitentiary and rehabilitation service.

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, the other day a man called me to discuss the problem that we have before us tonight. He said, "We need a new minister". My reply to him was, "I do not think we do. I think the minister may need a new broom." The minister has every right to the confidence, support and respect of the members of this House. He certainly has mine. But I do believe that he will have to initiate decisions and actions that will end the possibility of the kind of thing that has brought to a head the issue that we are discussing tonight. There will have to be a cleansing of the administration of the system over which he presides.

We do not quarrel with the system. Indeed, as has been pointed out by earlier speakers, when the Conservative party was in office it had much to do with the introduction of the system in terms of establishing the National Parole Board and, indeed, authorizing temporary leaves of absence. We agree with the system. What we cannot agree with is the way in which it is often being administered. That is why we believe it is in the interests of the people who are subject to the system, and in the interest of the welfare of Canadian society as a whole that parliament take a good, long, serious, probing look at the way the