

*Parole Act*

The problem is that too much effort has been expended by the Parole Board on allowing persons out on leave from the institution, persons who have clearly not demonstrated they are prepared to integrate into society. The people of this country are most concerned about the attitude that has been displayed by this government over the past years towards public safety. It is time they paid attention to the people of Canada and said: we will not allow people who have not reformed and who are still a menace to society to wander in the streets of this country. The thinking seems to be that since the rehabilitation, of the inmate may be helped by parole the rest of the people can take the consequences of the government's lack of ability to come to grips with social reality. Recently we had the example of a person released on a weekend pass who murdered the daughter of a prison guard.

How can any of us possibly be in favour of this kind of activity? If adding ten members to the Parole Board on an ad hoc basis will help, I compliment the minister for that addition. But unless there is a change in attitude in respect of allowing people their freedom prior to completion of their sentences, there will not be an improvement. This bill will only be a cover up for the problems that have occurred.

● (1620)

It may be that our prison system itself is totally at fault. Indeed, there has been more than ample evidence before a committee of this House which has yet to report that our prison system does little if anything to rehabilitate people, to reform people so that they can once again integrate into society. The number of persons who are allowed out of our institutions, either on parole or on completion of their sentences, and who return to those institutions again, and again and again, is overwhelming. Well over two-thirds of the people who serve time in our institutions return to serve time again. That is a disastrous situation.

It is high time the government introduced methods into the administration of our penal system that would rehabilitate people and thus enable them to integrate into society once more. It is high time the government took the clear stance that until the authorities were clearly satisfied that persons in institutions were properly able to integrate into society, those persons should stay in our institutions. Surely, the government has an obligation to protect those of us who perhaps need protection from the avarice, from the crime, from the brutality of some members of society who really do not fit into society.

I wish to refer to the amendments before us. They propose two things. They suggest that the Parole Board have at least two members representing the native culture of this country, and another two members who have had experience in the penal system on the other side of the fence. I commend the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) for bringing these to the attention of the House. But I, too, can see all sorts of reasons why it would be most difficult to talk about people of various racial backgrounds, people of various social experiences and backgrounds.

Certainly, we need good people, but one of the deep concerns is that the people serving on the Parole Board, and the people suggested by the minister for these ad hoc

jobs, are people who come from the goody-goody side of society. They are people who really do not know what it is all about. They have studied. They have gone to university, and they know something about penology. Maybe they were good police officers. Maybe they were fine lawyers at one time. But what do they know about sticking a knife in somebody's back, or how to make a zip gun in a penal institution, or how to sneak heroin, marijuana or cocaine into that institution? What do they know about imposing discipline in a penitentiary? They are goody-goodies, and they really cannot analyse whether a person has reformed and is able to go back into society. So, they go by the record. Some pretty competent people are criminals. Anyone who knows his way around knows how an institution works, knows how to fill in forms, knows the right things to say at the right time, and before the right officer.

It does not matter that the officer is not a member of the National Parole Board. The criminal can satisfy the guard on duty. He is a cute fellow, and he can persuade the parole Board that he should be allowed out. We need somebody who understands the criminal mind, who understands what is going on in an institution, who understands when someone is really ready for parole or just wants a night out on the town, or wants to return to work in his old profession. Making X number of judges or X number of former police officers or members of the Public service ad hoc members of the parole board is not good enough. The amendments proposed by the hon. member for Skeena stipulate that the board have a couple of native people on it, and a couple of ex-inmates. I suggest that the minister should not be bound to do either. Perhaps he should have more than two native people and more than two ex-inmates on the board. He should not be bound by exact numbers, but he certainly should have people on the board who are not just goody-goodies. The minister should appoint people who know what is going on in the institutions, who could get inside the prisoners, who would understand when they are ready for parole, and when they are rehabilitated.

We have all had experiences in our constituencies of people allowed out on parole or probation. Recently in my riding one young man was allowed out on parole. It was said that he was going to be able to get a job and do all sorts of wonderful things. He got out in June. He had 12 offers of jobs from the Manpower organization. He has not taken one of them. He finds he can live well on welfare. I do not know what else he does for a living, but I am sure he does not live only on welfare. When will he be back in the institution? He will be back probably as soon as the police catch him. Clearly, he was not ready for parole. Yet we let him out of the institution so that he can be put on welfare, so that he can engage in his other activity again, so that he can keep the police officers busy, keep another court busy, and provide work for more lawyers and legal aid people before he goes back to jail.

That is not rehabilitation. That is not the proper use of parole. But that is the kind of thing that has gone on and is going on. If adding ten new members to the Parole Board will help, that will be great. But first the board itself must look seriously at how it is operating, to see if it is going to get down to business, to see if, as suggested by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), it gets the judges report at the time of the original sentencing, to see