

*Privilege—Mr. S. J. Robinson*

We come now to the critical words, Madam Speaker:

I categorically can deny that because independent witnesses were present during the time that took place.

This did not occur!

Now, this has satisfied me that there is no credibility to these allegations—I should add, if any substance is added to any of the allegations of inmates by this process—

I suppose this refers to the various investigations.

—then a judicial inquiry could well be justified at some point down the road, but it is not now.

● (1520)

In other words, Madam Speaker, at that point in response to calls for a full, independent, judicial inquiry, not only by myself but by representatives of the official opposition, the minister said that these allegations were categorically unfounded, that there was no substance to them, but that if in the future there was some substance to them then indeed an independent judicial inquiry might very well be considered.

The Solicitor General went on and it was very clear that he was relying upon the warden of the institution, presumably, as well as other individuals four days later at the justice committee, when he said:

While the inmates allege that they were stripped, handcuffed to the bars of their cells, tear-gassed and beaten. At all material times the warden was present and members of the RCMP were present and they deny that anything like that happened, that the inmates were tortured at all, so I do not feel that that is an allegation that I should be concerned about.

One final quotation from the Solicitor General on November 4, Madam Speaker, is as follows:

But I feel those allegations have been sufficiently discredited in the last few days by a recent statement of the warden that he was present at material times with members of the RCMP who are, of course, outsiders as far as the correctional service is concerned and that no such gassing and beating took place.

Those statements were simply not accurate. The minister was misleading the committee and, through the committee, was misleading the House. I say that because I recently obtained a copy of the confidential special inquiry report drawn up by the Solicitor General's own officials, including the Inspector General, Mr. Renshaw, another independent person from New Brunswick, and another member of the Inspector General's staff.

There is no doubt that this confidential report is couched in rather careful terminology. That is not surprising. It is an in-house report attempting to put the best possible gloss on the events that took place. Madam Speaker, no matter how one reads this document it is very clear that what the minister told the justice committee, and through it the people of Canada, and this House, was absolutely unfounded.

I should like to refer to this confidential special inquiry report which rebuts fundamentally the statements made by the Solicitor General in which he categorically said, without hesitation, that those allegations were totally unfounded. The report starts out by stating that the staff at Dorchester were interviewed, that inmates on the range were interviewed, and that the hostage takers themselves who had subsequently been

transferred, were also interviewed. There is then a chronology of events which took place at the penitentiary.

One of the critical points of the report is that immediately following the removal, the dragging of the hostage-takers out of that particular tier, for at least 20 minutes there were no independent witnesses present whatsoever. There were no RCMP officers—no independent witnesses at all, yet the Solicitor General said that at all material times independent RCMP witnesses were present. This report of his own inspector general says that just in not true, that during the critical period of time, the 20 minutes immediately following the removal of the hostage takers, there were no independent witnesses present and no RCMP officers whatsoever on D-4 range. The report goes on to say that there was absolutely no pre-planning, and I quote:

—there had been no pre-planning as to what was supposed to take place once the range had been secured.

One member of the security squad told everyone to sit on their beds and another one came along and told them to lie under their beds. They were stripped and told to lie under their beds. The report confirms that they were handcuffed very tightly with nylon handcuffs.

On the question of gassing, which the minister has denied took place, I quote:

Systematically, two IERT members—

That is the Independent Emergency Response Team.

—went from cell to cell and cuffed all inmates.

These were the inmates who were trapped on that tier. They were not involved in the hostage-taking in any way. They were innocent victims of what took place on that tier. The report states:

When an inmate did not respond immediately he was maced. An officer would grab the inmate's hands and pull on them to get them far enough out then cuff the wrists together.

For this they used flexicuffs, nylon bands approximately one quarter inch wide. The wrists were very closely bound and the cuff tightened snugly, with the hands in a prayer-like fashion.

The chronology continues. The incident started about 6.40. By 9.19 one of the hostage takers who was down in dissociation was being watched by the RCMP. He was their prisoner. The RCMP were so concerned about what was happening there that an RCMP constable told the IERT officers that he was the RCMP's prisoner and he did not want anything to happen to him. The RCMP officer did not like the way Enman was handled. Then, in an incident which even this special in-house inquiry report has referred to as degrading treatment of a prisoner, there were at least three masked IERT members who dragged one of the hostage takers, head first, across the main dome and down C-1 range to the hospital in such a way that his buttocks and back would slide along the floor. The report goes on to say that the RCMP again said to the guards that the RCMP were in charge and that it was not the guards who were running the prison at that point, because things were clearly out of hand.