

Justice. It is evident that in making this recommendation the royal commission had in mind its further recommendation—

And I think this is important.

—that the federal government take over the administration of all the prisons in Canada, thus centralizing the control of the Canadian penal system under the government of Canada.

Mr. MacNICOL: Did that include the provincial prisons?

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, which we do not propose to do.

As will be stated later, it is not yet considered practicable to give effect to this recommendation—

I do not know whether it will ever be practicable to give effect to the recommendation.

Mr. GREEN: From what page is the minister reading?

Mr. ILSLEY: Part of the time I am reading from page 8, and part of the time I am interjecting my own comments.

As will be stated later, it is not yet considered practicable to give effect to this recommendation and the government has recently decided that for the present it is preferable to entrust the administration of the penitentiaries of Canada to a single commissioner assisted by two deputy commissioners, with a headquarters organization consisting of the inspectors and staff of the present penitentiaries branch, the inspectors being reclassified as assistant commissioners.

It is proposed that one deputy commissioner will be primarily charged with the selection, training, assessment and further reconstruction of the staffs of the penitentiaries and with the organization and supervision of a training school for penitentiary officers. He will also be responsible for the supervision and development of the educational facilities in the institutions under the control of the dominion government.

It is proposed that the second deputy commissioner will be primarily charged with supervision and development of the medical and psychiatric services, physical training and recreational facilities as well as the development of research and statistics to assess the adequacy and results of present and proposed methods of correctional treatment.

The next paragraph, which I shall not read, deals with the assistant commissioners. The bill will concern itself with the appointment of the commissioner and two deputy commissioners; that is really what the bill is. We must proclaim the act of 1939 after we make the changes parliament considers appropriate, and the government is recommending to parliament that, instead of proceeding with this three-man commission, we substitute instead one commissioner and two deputy commissioners, for the reasons I have given here. In the late thirties much faith was reposed in three-man boards or five-man boards or larger

boards, and there is much to be said for that form of organization in dealing with certain matters. But in the legislation the principle of responsibility to the minister is preserved, and I think parliament would want it preserved. It is provided in the bill that the penitentiaries commission at all times must be subject to the direction and control of the minister, and it is our view that better results will be obtained if, instead of having a board under the minister, we have one commissioner under the minister. That is, we think, a better form of organization, provided that you get a good man; and I do not think I should hesitate about stating who the commissioner will be if this legislation goes through. The commissioner will be General Gibson, who up to this moment has been doing a special task of examining the whole problem. I should make it clear, too, that this recommendation did not emanate from him. This recommendation emanated from the government. It was not he who recommended that he be the sole commissioner; it was the government that asked him to be the sole commissioner, subject to the approval of parliament, and we anticipate that it will be possible to get highly qualified deputy commissioners, each of whose work will be clearly delimited and defined in the way I have mentioned, and that this organization will form the best basis for effecting certain changes and improvements in the penal system of Canada.

So often I hear that the government should carry out the findings of the Archambault commission. One of the recommendations of that commission was that in some way the dominion government should take charge of the penal system of Canada, which, unless indefensible duplication existed, would involve the taking over of a large number of provincial institutions. We have not the slightest indication that the provinces would be willing to have that done, and we have not any intention of trying to centralize authority and power in Ottawa in that way. It may be that there is much to be said for a complete integration of the penal system of Canada. But a division of responsibility is clearly contemplated under the British North America Act, and it is our intention to respect the provisions of that act.

I see that some hon. members have read the report of General Gibson, a report which, in my opinion, is a practical one. The steps which were taken by General Gibson before he came to his decisions are set out in his report; and I think those who are interested in the improvement of the penal system in Canada have been much impressed with his report.