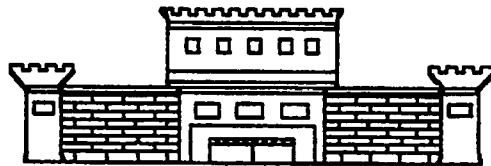


TOCSIN NEWSLETTER

May/June '89



JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY
COLLINS BAY CHAPTER



COLLINS BAY PENITENTIARY

John Howard Society

C.B.I. Chapter

Aims and Objectives

1. The abolishment of Mandatory Supervision.
2. The abolishment of all Special Handling Units.
3. The abolishment of 25 year minimum sentences.
4. Against construction of new prisons.
5. Decent comparable wages for skilled and unskilled labour.
6. A more humane prison system.
7. Introduction to prison industry.
8. A more liberal parole program.
9. Introduction of effective pre-release programs.
10. Fair and equal sentences.
11. Introductions of alternatives.
12. To make the public aware of the realities of the criminal justice, parole and prison systems.
13. To make bail a right, not a privilege.
14. To fight for prisoners rights.
15. To constantly remind everyone that we are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment.
16. To help all prisoners in whatever manner and way possible.

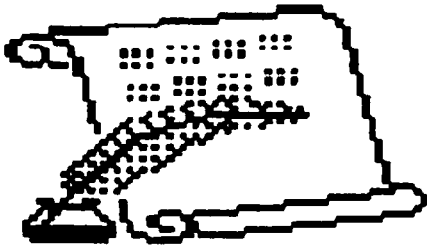
The meaning of TOCSIN: A bell sounded with quick strokes for the purpose of alarm. The word is derived from the french, and the use of the Tocsin as a signal to arouse the people, was so common during the French Revolution, that the word has come to be proverbially used for any loud sound or call marking the commencement of an important event.

TOCSIN NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor.....Arnaldo Morello
Chairman.....Robert Palmer
Vice - Chairman.....Joe Titus
Secretary.....Ty Conn

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Editorial

This is my first editorial for the Tocsin. Hopefully upon finding a new Editor for the Tocsin I will be able to call this my one and only editorial.

Our most recent Editor, and in fact the person responsible for most of the layout on this issue and all of the last four issues of the Tocsin (Italo Morello) is being released. Myself and the entire group membership wish him all the best in his future. He will definitely not be easily replaced.

The Tocsin must now once again begin a new phase. It is our hope that under a new Editor the Tocsin will continue to grow and develop. For this to be possible we need not only input and encouragement from both inside and outside the prison walls, but we also need criticism. Only with these will the Tocsin be able to become the newsletter that everyone involved would like to see it develop into.

Should you have something to say this is the place for it. So if anything that you read in this issue either makes you nod your head in agreement or shake it in disgust, write your feelings down and send them in to us. We may nod our heads in agreement, or shake our heads in disgust too. But no matter what you will hear back from us.

Until next issue, keep us in mind and remember " We have lots to say, if only someone would let us know that they are listening ".

Robert Palmer

Taking Responsibility

Although many inmates of prisons do not fit the stereotype of the criminal, all have committed acts that are considered crimes. People are inherently good, and it is society that makes them unhappy and, sometimes, increasingly vile. Criminal attitudes and behaviour are learned, and are a reflection of society. The huge number of incarcerated people in Canada is evidence that there is something seriously wrong in our society, and that the system of corrections is a failure.

Inmates make many valid complaints regarding the conditions of prisons and its adverse effects. The deterioration of the environment seems to begin with a negative attitude to offenders and the warehouses in which they are kept. One senator said, in reference to custodial treatment, "Believe me, I have watched the system for the past 20 years and I have given up all hope of ever finding logical answers." It seems that the bureaucracy governing the system of corrections is aware of problems, but isn't particularly enthusiastic about implementing prison reform, even if it would serve justice, society, and the victims of crime equally.

Specific incidents involving indivi-

dual parolees and residents of halfway houses, together with the general level of recidivism (returning to prison after having been released) have resulted in a review of sentencing, conditional releases, and related aspects of corrections under Standing Order 96(2). The House of Commons Standing Committee of Justice and the Solicitor General produced a report in August 1988 - "Taking Responsibility" - that contained 97 recommendations and urged the government to implement them.

The first of these is that all federal participants in the criminal justice system, including the voluntary section, make educating the public about the operation of the criminal justice system a high priority.

The reality of corrections in Canada is that not very much of the 50-odd thousand dollars it costs to keep one inmate in prison for one year goes to fund programs that is essential in the rehabilitative process. If it were not for programs initiated through community volunteers, some federal institutions would have no programs at all. The reality is that, although all prisoners are eventually released and expected to fit into society, many are confined to cells for 23 and a half

hours per day. The most abominable reality is that the Canadian government continues to pour millions of taxdollars into building new prisons where the breeding of anger, resentment and negative attitudes is the only noticeable result.

If incarceration were a sufficient deterrent, there would be no need to build new prisons. Effective rehabilitation programs would cause a decrease, rather than the present alar-

ming increase, in the crime rate. Keeping human beings locked in cages does nothing to teach them alternatives to a life of crime, nor does it compensate victims. Debts to society only become compounded. If Canadian society doesn't take part of the responsibility, there will never be an opportunity for reconciliation.

Condensed from *In The Prison Gang* (Phoenix Rising Newsletter), by Zoltan Lugosi. ■

The story of Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody

Once upon a time there were four men named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. But Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it. But Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about it, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, and Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody and Nobody did the job that Anybody could have done in the first place. At last report, these four men were still arguing and the job they were supposed to do still wasn't done. *

The Mission Statement

This article is based on excerpt's from a critique that I put together on behalf of the John Howard Society Chapter of Collins Bay Penitentiary. If you would like a copy of our critique sent to you, write to us giving your name and address. We will be glad to send one to you.

Because there are so many different areas addressed in the Mission Statement, I will not attempt to even touch on all of the areas and concerns in this article. I have tried to narrow this down to an overall view of our feelings and impressions of the Mission Statement.

In this article I do not attempt to imply that I have a thorough understanding of the Mission Statement. As a point, in fact, one of the reasons that we put together a critique and this article, is because we feel that knowledge and understanding of the Mission Statement at all levels is missing. I attempt to voice my specific concerns in various areas of the document, and to raise questions that I feel need to be answered. Hopefully, by making some of the feelings and concerns of prisoners known, the issues raised will be looked at.

The John Howard Society Chapter

of Collins Bay is action oriented and thus actively involved in all aspects of the corrections system that we can be. As we have a vested interest in the Justice, Corrections and Parole systems, we are constantly watching for the opening of new avenues that will enable us to further become involved in programs, and issues pertaining to any of the three systems.

Due to our interest in the Corrections system, the group has paid particularly close attention to the Mission Statement. As a result of this scrutiny, we have come to what we feel to be some accurate conclusions regarding the Mission Statement.

It is the feeling of the group, that there is no new or innovative ideas contained in the Mission Statement. Neither does there appear to be any plans to initiate new programs. The ideas and types of programs spoken of, are ideas that at one time or another have already been in place. All, but possibly one or two of those past programs, were started by an influence other than the Corrections system or by a combination of prisoners, groups and outside agencies. If such programs were successful, and we believe that for the most part they were, why were they stopped, and by

whom? In researching this, we found out that these programs did not just simply fade away, but in fact were stopped by the Corrections system for a variety of reasons, ranging from security concerns to a lack of funding. What guarantees are there that this cycle will not be repeated once again? Certainly a document the length of the Mission Statement is not expected to prevent this.

If left up to the individual in the corrections system to interpret the Mission Statement, we strongly feel that the focus will be placed upon only two areas contained in the document. The first area being that of staff, whether it is management concerns, (employer - employee relations) or dealing with union concerns and problems. The second, is an area that if not properly interpreted and fully understood, could serve to only send Corrections reeling backwards instead of striding forwards in Canada. This is the area that envelops release and control (security).

Should release of prisoners become any later (and/or backlogged), the hope of introducing release programs and the success rate of such, would be drastically reduced. Also, should Control (security) have any more influence on release and programs that it presently does, nothing constructive and concrete will ever get off

the ground.

The following is a very small selection of the questions that our group and prisoners in general have regarding the Mission Statement. Hopefully, we will be able to have the concerns and questions of prisoners, guards, and the public answered before the full implementation of the Mission Statement is complete.

Questions on the Mission Statement:

Q: Who has read the Mission Statement?

Q: Who has not only understood this document, but has in fact interpreted it correctly?

Q: Has this Statement been officially recognized as setting out the guidelines and direction of corrections by not only the Correctional Service System itself, but by the government of Canada?

Q: How many people, and by whom, have been given training that would enable the principles and objectives set out in this document to be implemented successfully into each and every separate institution across

Canada?

Q: Have people with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Mission Statement, been appointed to positions that would enable programs set out in the guidelines, to be introduced and carried out properly?

Q: What understanding, and to what extent, do the employees of Corrections Canada, right from the Warden's to the tower guards have? Were they left to interpret the statement on their own, or were they given explanations and direction? And if so, by whom?

Q: What and which programs will be put in place as a result of this document? Is there set funding for such programs? And how much input will the prisoner have in the introduction and implementation of any

changes to existing programs or the creation of new programs?

Q: How does the creation of new ideas and programs change the problems with the existing ideas and programs?

Q: Who is knowledgeable enough about the Mission Statement to answer not only these questions, but also other questions on the Mission Statement?

In summary, the Mission Statement should, and needs to be carefully examined and cautiously explained, before any implementation of it can possibly be expected to provide positive results for the Corrections system, the Prisoner and the public.

by Robert Palmer, JHS CBI ■

A SPECIAL WEEKEND - JULY 29 , 30TH

Once again the Exceptional People's Olympiad is just around the corner. This is a very special weekend for both the 130 Developmentally Handicapped persons and the men of Collins Bay Penitentiary who will take part in this years weekend of athletic games and other fun events.

These two day's represent a significant time for all of us here at Collins Bay. Not only do we get the opportunity to share in the joy of seeing someone less fortunate than ourselves have a great time, but we get to be active participants in bringing a smile to the face of some very special people. Many consider this a bigger event in their lives than any other single weekend.

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Prisoner's Justice Day:

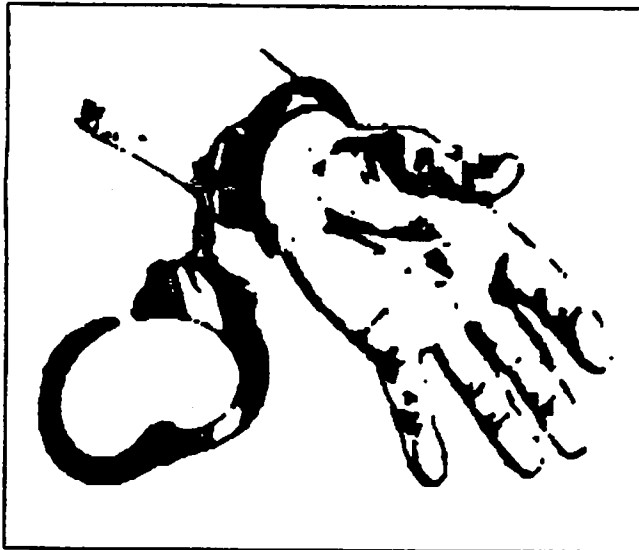
August 10th

On August 10th, Eddie Nalon slashed himself and bled to death in solitary confinement at Millhaven Penitentiary. Prisoners who were also in solitary could not arouse a guard because the emergency button system had been dismantled by the guards. No one ever got to tell Eddie that his release from isolation had been ordered ten days prior to his death.

On August 10th, 1975, the Millhaven prisoners refused to work in order to commemorate the death of Eddie Nalon and to protest the destructive prison conditions that caused Eddie, and so many others to mutilate or kill themselves. Ever since that day, August 10th has been designated Prison Justice Day.

For fourteen years, thousands of prisoners across Canada have refused to work or eat for 24 hours on August 10th, along with support demonstrations held outside the prisons. We use this day to commem-

orate the prisoners that have died un-necessarily, and to bring attention to the conditions that caused these deaths. These people are much more than just statistics or casualties of the Prison system. They are real people who lived and died amongst us in prisons across Canada.



On August 10th we will commemorate our fallen brothers and sisters by not eating anything for 24 hours from midnight August 9th until midnight August 10th. We will refuse to work on August 10th. What we will do is take time to remember the men

and women who lived and died while serving time. We will remember not only their deaths but also their lives.

Please support Prisoners Justice Day August 10th. Help to honour the lives and deaths of the men and women who have died behind the prison walls.

In remembrance, Robert Palmer ■

Developing Attitudes

Attitudes!!! Everyone has them. About your job, your neighborhood, the government, the postal service and the prison system. I am presently serving a life sentence in prison. Due to this fact and my charge being a murder conviction, I have been told (and have heard other prisoners being told) that "You have an attitude problem." This may be true in a majority of cases.

But I then ask what has caused me to form my present attitude. It has been my observation that information collected on a given subject will thereby cause an individual to form an attitude on that subject. Whether the information I've used to form my attitude is correct or not, is for the most part uncertain.

After giving this a great amount of thought and asking a variety of people, (fellow prisoners, staff, volunteers and friends outside the prison) about the same subject, I found that my thoughts, feelings and attitudes were in fact formed, or at the very least, strongly influenced by the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of others. What surprised me the most was that some paid particular attention to facts, while others twisted or totally ignored them. But not one person told me that they didn't know enough or have the correct facts on any of the subjects that I questioned them on.

Should you be like myself, you most likely get most of your information from newspapers, television and books. You have been influenced by other individuals attitudes. Different individuals presenting the same subject, who also have the same facts available to them, will be able to present that subject while still giving the same facts from completely different outlooks. So it appears that while giving the true facts, it is still possible to sway someone else's attitude.

Having now done some research and seen how I was able to influence and in some cases change others attitudes towards me -or a certain subject- has caused me to question most of my thoughts, feelings and therefore attitudes on quite a large number of things. Most were not formed on personal experience or by having all the available facts at hand.

Unfortunately, not enough people have positive attitudes towards most things in their lives. Tragically a large percentage have quite a negative attitude towards their life altogether. Let's face it: Most newspapers, books and television news stories are based around tragedies and just plain bad news. After all, who wants to hear or read about the great day, week or life of someone else and all the great things that happened in the world, when you can hear about the trage-

dies, mistakes and problems in the world today? Not only does pleasant news not sell very well, but is usually overshadowed by more sensational, horrendous news.

For me personally, the tragedies and injustices in the world seem to make my present day to day life much more bearable. Considering I'm serving a lengthy prison sentence that would appear to say two things. First, that I believe that there are people in the world who are living under far worse conditions and circumstances than myself. That is quite a negative statement because not only do I believe that the conditions and circumstances I am presently living under are not a way that anyone should be confined to live under, but the fact that the people of which I speak have done nothing to warrant living under such adverse conditions. (this is the true crime.) And second, that there are times when I feel sick looking at what we have done to our environment, the way that we treat each other, and the creatures that share our world.

So in some ways I guess you could come to the conclusion that in fact I do have a negative attitude when it comes to certain conditions that I find the world in.

Still, there are beautiful and wondrous things in the world that make life so worth living. Myself, I try to concentrate on just those such

things.

By doing so I find it easier trying to do things that may help to change the present cycle of destruction and devastation the world finds itself in. There is also the possibility that I do not have all of the correct facts or I have been influenced by others attitudes around me; I really wish I could believe that is in fact true.

When reading the Tocsin I urge you to try to keep an open mind and take a long look at the facts.

The attitudes of the men who write articles for this newsletter may vary from yours, but is it not a variety of opinions and views that will enable you to come to your own conclusion? One of our main goals by publishing the Tocsin, is to give the prisoners of Collins Bay an avenue to express their feelings and thoughts on any issue they feel strongly enough about to write an article on and supply the community with a opportunity to do the same.

Whether any of the articles or news you read or hear today, good or bad, will be the same as your own is unimportant. If nothing else, you will be a better informed individual as a result. That in itself is reason enough to keep reading and listening.

Have a good attitude .
by Robert Palmer, J. H. S., C.B.I. ■

Prisoners and Parole

A Human Life or a Public Risk

Parole began more than 140 years ago in the Australian penal colonies. Prisoners, after serving part of their sentences and demonstrating good behaviour, were freed under a primitive form of parole.

Today, although the process has become much more complex, the basic idea remains the same. To have some prisoners serve part of their sentences in the community, rather than in prison. With recent talk in the Correctional field of reintegration of prisoners back into society, this also becomes part of the parole system. With such lengthy sentences having become common over the last decade, there appears to be more prisoners coming out on parole, coming out earlier, and for longer periods than before.

The reason more prisoners are now coming out of prison on parole, is because of a large increase in the prison population over the last fifteen years. When in 1976 Canada introduced Life sentences with no eligibility for parole of between ten and twenty-five years, depending on

the murder conviction, sentences for other serious and even non-violent crimes rose also as the precedent of unbelievably long sentences had been set.

There are now men and women coming out of prison and into society who have served much longer sentences than anyone previously. So it may appear that they are getting out earlier, but in fact all that they are getting is out after serving much longer sentences and for longer periods on parole.

Having served such long sentences while society has changed so drastically in the area of technology, combined with the pace of today's life style, is going to require a great ability of adaptation from the prisoner being released into today's society.

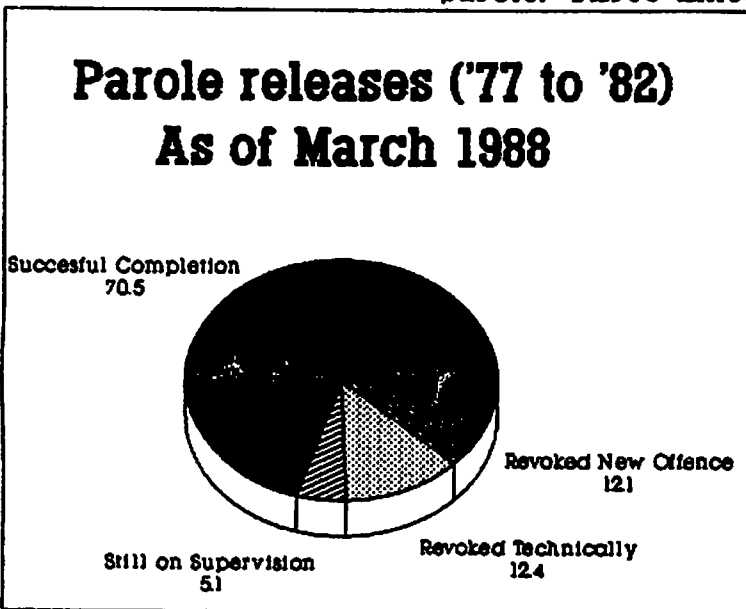
I propose that in the case of incarcerated prisoners who do not pose a serious threat to the public, by keeping those men and women in prison, all that is accomplished is making the chance of a successful release plan

and the ability to execute it only that much more difficult.

Taking into account that Canada jails 106 people for every 100,000 in the population, the federal prison population is at present about 12,500, and there are about 8,500 convicts free on some sort of parole.

The Canadian public must face the fact that more prisoners will be getting released on some sort of parole after serving lengthy sentences. Some will have all but lost touch with today's way of life, and without having had programs available geared at dealing with not only the effects of having been imprisoned, but the effects of being released.

Upon their release the average prisoner will not find a broad support network, aimed at helping them stay out of prison by not re-offending. Taking all of this into consideration, it is amazing that the success rate of Unescorted Temporary Absence (99%), Mandatory (57.0%) and Full Parole (70.5%), is as high as it is. A follow up of Full Parole releases from 1977 to 1982 as of March 1987 are:



Successful completion of supervision - 70.5% (5,533); Still under supervision 5.1% (398); Revoked for technical violation - 12.4% (972); Revoked with new offence - 12.1% (972).

As for men and women convicted of murder. Statistics show that they are very unlikely to kill again. Between 1975 and 1986, 473 people convicted of murder were released on parole. Three killed again. Of all the crimes in Canada in 1986, .03 per cent - or three in 10,000 - were committed by people on parole.

The public's concern about parole is not unfounded. But the concerns do not appear to be focusing on the problem areas. Instead, the public is being led to believe that crime is rampant.

The recent issue about young offenders, where community groups are calling for tougher sentences for young offenders and that these young people not be released to their community, only shows the public's misconception of crime and punishment.

Statistics prove that crime is simply

not out of control. In fact, the problems that have led to the present number of men, women and children being behind bars is a problem facing all of society and not just certain areas, cultures or races.

Groups such as the Edmonton Based Victims of Violence argue for longer sentences and tighter parole policies. These groups must decide what it is that they intend on accomplishing and begin calling those goals for what they really are. Should they get their wish for longer sentences and tighter parole, all that will be accomplished is more men and women behind bars serving even longer sentences.

These prisoners will still be getting released some day. But now they will be more out of touch with society, with less hope for their future and entering a society with an even worse attitude towards an ex-offender than at present.

The public attitude towards offenders and ex-offenders will be worse as a result of a failed corrections system. I not only agree that the public has a right to be angry but urge the public to call for immediate changes to our corrections system. My hopes of course, are that this would be guided by knowledgeable and concerned men and women, and not by revenge seeking, misinformed recent victims

of crime. How can I attempt to reach people who have suffered as tragic losses as quite a few of these men and women have, while at the same time showing these people that their solutions are not solutions at all, but in fact would serve to only worsen today's problems tomorrow?

Steps should be taken now, so that today does not become tomorrow's "good old days," in the field of corrections.

The push for longer sentences should be called exactly what it is. People angry with the corrections system looking to punish someone. That someone is prisoners. How can this be called anything less than vengeance?

The Canadian Correctional System has for the most part, followed in the steps of what must be called one of the worst systems in the free world: The system in the United States of America. There are systems set up in some European countries that statistically show a much reduced crime rate, far less serious and violent crimes, and a vastly superior success rate for release of offenders. These systems are set up on knowledge, understanding and programs that

enable reintegration of offenders back into society at a reduced risk far earlier than we presently have in this country.

TTrue; this would obviously not satisfy the people calling for harsher sentencing and later release. However, should the overall goal of Corrections not be a system that works? A system that given time will be responsible for a reduction in crime while keeping all citizens safer and allow most of the

present prisoners to be contributing men and women in their communities.

SSteps that will bring about positive change need to be undertaken now, so that today does not become tomorrow's "good old days" in the field of corrections.

by Robert Palmer, JHS, CBI ■

cont. from page #8

The games for the athletes combined with participation of the entire population of Collins Bay, not to mention the support and attendance of some friends from outside the prison, is such an amazing event to be involved in that I wish everyone could have the opportunity to be a part of this event.

Work on putting this years Olympiad together started the day after last years Olympiad ended. It took the hard work of two men Ken Logan - Chairman and Jerry Martin - Secretary all year along with the help and cooperation of various individuals at different stages of planning to bring all of the people involved together on the same day, at the same place and at the same time.

Should you be attending and participating in this years Olympiad I can guarantee you a very enjoyable experience that you will remember for a long time to come. If you are not able to attend this years Olympiad may I suggest that you set aside the time to become involved in next years Olympiad. Again I can not say enough about what a positive experience one short weekend can be.

If you would like any information about the Olympiad, how you can become involved or if you wish to become a sponsor of the Olympiad.

Please contact: Chairman Exceptional People's Olympiad
Collins Bay Penitentiary
P. O. Box 190
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 4V9

Nine Famous Prisoners

Ireland, 1848:

Nine men are captured, tried and convicted of treason against Her Majesty, the Queen, and sentenced to death: John Mitchell, Morris Lyene, Pat Donahue, Thomas McGee, Charles Duffy, Thomas Meagher, Richard O'Gorman, Terrence McManus and Michael Ireland.

Before passing down his sentence, the judge asks if there is anything that anyone wishes to say.

The prisoner Meagher speaks for all saying: "My Lord, this is our first offence, but not our last. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise, on our word as gentleman, to try to do better next time. And the next time - sure we won't be fools to get caught!"

Indignant, the judge sentences them all to be drawn and quartered and hanged by the neck until dead.

Passionate protest arises from all the world and forces Queen Victoria to commute the sentence to transportation for life in far wild Australia.

In 1874, word reaches an astounded Queen Victoria that the Sir Charles Duffy who has been elected Prime Minister of Australia is the same Charles Duffy who had been transported 25 years before.

On the Queen's demand, the records of the rest of the transported men is uncovered to reveal:

Thomas Meagher, Governor of Montana.

Terrence McManus, Brigadier General, United States Army.

Patrick Donahue, Brigadier General, United States Army.

Richard O'Gorman, Governor General of Newfoundland.

Morris Lyene, Attorney General, Australia in which office Michael Ireland succeeded him.

Thomas McGee, Member of Parliament, Montreal, Minister of Agriculture and President of Council Dominion of Canada.

John Mitchell, prominent New York politician. (This man was the father of John Purroy Mitchell, Mayor of New York at the outbreak of World War 1) ■

The man in the glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife
Who judgement upon you must pass
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may think you're a straight shooting chum
And call you a wonderful guy
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
For he's with you clear up to the end
And you've past your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

Author Unknown.

The Collins Bay Chapter of John Howard Society must absorb the cost of the printing and postage for the Tocsin Newsletter, therefore it is necessary for the rate of yearly subscriptions to be \$12.00. We need your support to make the Tocsin a functional project. Not only do we need your subscription, but we would also appreciate articles of interest for the men behind these walls here at Collins Bay, and for other federal penitentiaries across Canada. So please support us and submit your articles today for the next issue. Just fill out a subscription form (below) for yourself or for a friend. Articles are to be sent to:

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