

I advocated the passage of the bill, believing that it was in the interests of parole. The Bill would relieve the Governor of the handling of parole cases and I suppose that no Governor would be averse to being relieved of what is a most exacting task, although none would desire to shirk responsibility. The measure would give exclusive authority to the Parole Director to grant these releases from the penal institutions. Of course, his action would not be reviewable by any other authority and he would be answerable to no one directly. It was my belief that the majority of people who have been interested in this subject were in favor of adopting this policy.

However, since the adjournment of the Legislature, I have received comments from Judges in various parts of the State who seriously doubt the wisdom of placing such far-reaching powers in the hands of one appointed official. They have the utmost confidence in the present Director of Parole. However, as some have pointed out, if he should relinquish the office they would be very much concerned over his successor who could, without notice to the public, release malefactors from the penal institutions when their applications for parole were taken up.

I have consulted former Commissioners of Parole and they bear out the Judges in their opposition to the Bill, although they, too, have the greatest respect for the present Director.

It is pointed out that, under the proposed law, the Board which was set up by the 1939 General Assembly is abolished. Two of the subordinates of the Director of Parole would constitute a Board of Review under the proposed statute. A further comment is offered in that if the proposed change is made, the Governor would still handle cases concerning conditional pardons, partial pardons and commutations of sentence whereas the Director of Parole would handle parole cases. This it is alleged might lead to a situation where the two officials would be handling different applications for one or other forms of release concerning the same individual. Possibly, less objection would be heard if a Board would be set up rather than to vest all the authority in an individual Director.

It would be most unfortunate if parole in our State, which has been handled much more satisfactorily during recent years than previously, would be given a setback through some criticism of a Director's action, either for bad judgment or otherwise. Several reports from J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation have been sent me showing what can happen and has happened in other States.

I intend to ask the Legislative Council to make a study of this question with a view to considering a recommendation for a Board of Pardon and Parole in whom might be vested all powers, not only for parole but for pardons as well. Suggestion has been made that, if the power is to be vested in one