



INFORMATION UPDATE

November
2011

MEETING VIC TOEWS

Will support Blood Samples Act

UCCO-SACC-CSN succeeded in opening a channel of communication with Public Safety Minister Vic Toews November 3 during a meeting in his Parliament Hill office. National President Pierre Mallette and CSN Coordinator Michel Bouchard spoke with the minister for 20 minutes and continued an exchange of views and information with his top aides after Mr. Toews was called away for a vote in the House of Commons.

The minister opened the meeting by saying he strongly supported the union's demand for a Blood Samples Act to ensure access to an inmate's health status when a correctional officer is exposed to the inmate's bodily fluids. Mr. Toews said it is a logical protection for our members, and indicated that he did not see possible constitutional objections as legally valid. He added that he hoped to see a private member's bill introduced on the subject, as the government's legislative agenda is full.

The union raised the problem of inmate population management. Pierre Mallette gave the minister a detailed briefing of the growing challenges posed by organized criminal groups, which are struggling to gain control of various federal institutions. Mr. Toews and his staff were receptive to the

union's call for a discussion of how to check the power of criminal gangs.

In particular, the national president spoke of the chronic problem of drug "throw overs" at Stony Mountain Institution. After a decision to open an area of the outdoor recreation yard to inmates, drug smuggling sharply increased via the simple method of throwing packages over the prison walls. The union raised the issue with the warden, who has refused to review the decision.

Mr. Toews said he was aware of media coverage of this problem, adding that he does not understand the decision. He said he wanted the problem solved and asked his assistant to follow up on this dossier.

After Mr. Toews was called away to the House of Commons, the union continued to discuss various issues with the minister's staff. Among the topics raised were new construction design, and the issue of double bunking. Mr. Mallette reiterated the union's longstanding concerns over the difficulty of controlling inmate movements in the construction of new cell units, which lack barriers. The national president pointed to the obvious safety issues raised by the choice of this prison design.



Public Safety Minister Vic Toews outside
Stony Mountain Institution, November 2010