

More prisoners worry staff; After six more portables were added to the Fraser Regional Correctional Centre, the prison guards' union are concerned more migrants are coming.

Six new portables were installed at a Maple Ridge men's prison, but while the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) said those are just for staff, there are rumours going around that say otherwise.

"The alarm bells are going off for us," said Dean Purdy, chairman of the Corrections and Sheriff's Services Unit of the B.C. Government Employees Union.

"At this point it is speculation," he added, "but there are rumours from the Canadian Border Services floating around."

Spokesperson for the CBSA, Shakila Manzoor, said that the portables were put in place to expand accommodations for the staff, and to improve their working area.

"Better worker conditions and better enhancements for computer connectivity," she said. Purdy is not convinced however, and said that if CBSA weren't concerned about more prisoners arriving, then they shouldn't need to upgrade things. He said they have also updated the satellite system and the wiring from the yard to the main jail.

"The job of a correctional officer is already very difficult," he said, adding that at Fraser Regional, one officer can work alone with up to 40 inmates. Purdy is also concerned about Bills C-25 and S-10, as both could make the prisons even more crowded. C-25 was passed last year, and it means that there is no longer any two-for-one credit for time served, and 1 1/2 time credit is available only in exceptional circumstances. This means more people could be returning to jail to finish their sentences after their hearings.

S-10, which has not yet passed, would impose a mandatory prison sentence of six to nine months, if a person is caught growing six or more cannabis plants and there is evidence of trafficking.

"It's part of the Harper government 'get tough on crime legislation'," said Purdy.