

**Mr. Alexander:** If my leadership is wanting, if my attitudes are inconsistent with those of my constituents, then surely I must face the penalty. What is the penalty, Mr. Speaker? The penalty is the possibility of defeat at the next election.

If my constituents on an over-all assessment of my contribution to this House, not only with respect to capital punishment but with respect to my role as opposition critic—I am not bragging about that, I happen to be fortunate—with respect to unemployment insurance, Manpower, welfare, urban affairs, labour, the many questions I have asked, the many concerns I have registered—

**An hon. Member:** The many you have created.

**Mr. Alexander:** I am not in as much trouble as you are, sitting as a government member.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. Will the hon. member please address the Chair.

**Mr. Alexander:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for admonishing that member who spoke out of turn.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** After that over-all assessment of my role as a representative, I will face that penalty. However, there is one thing that I have found out about my constituents. Many of them dislike my position on this bill, but they respect the intestinal fortitude that I have portrayed.

I am the one who has to face myself in the morning. I am the one who has to live with this decision. I am the one who, after many years of studied concern, had to reach this conclusion. I did not reach it overnight. I do not think any member reached this conclusion overnight. This has been a burning issue for all of us. However, every now and again a person must stand up for what he believes, regardless of what the penalty may be, as long as it is in a legitimate way.

My constituents know that I am an abolitionist. They knew that in 1968, 1972, and 1974. I mentioned it over television. I mentioned it by way of a newsletter. I have stated it in speeches. However, they re-elected me, and for that I am very grateful. And I will go to them again whenever that gang over there has the guts to pull the plug.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Alexander:** I had better not get partisan. That is usually not my role. I will withdraw that remark if it will allow members to listen to me and accept the proposition which I place before them.

Capital punishment is foreign to my makeup in that I feel it is dangerous, ineffective, and barbaric. To elaborate further on that statement, I wish to make the following comments.

First, I am concerned about and question the morale related to capital punishment. Second, I believe that a mistake is possible through capital punishment, and thus an innocent person can be put to death. Third, I have concluded after much soul-searching and study that capital punishment can be justified only if it has a real deterrent

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value. However, I am unconvinced that capital punishment does deter murder.

Fourth, although I have concluded that capital punishment does not deter murder, I feel that the doubt created in many, including the experts by their findings, as to whether there is a deterrent value to capital punishment must be resolved because of the doubt in favour of the right to and the sanctity of life. Fifth, I believe that capital punishment dismisses too easily the cause of violence and the need to bring into focus and effect possible cures. This is where the emphasis should be.

We are living in a sick, violent society. We note the disrespect for the home, the family, the church, the schools, law and order, and our basic institutions. I do not believe that capital punishment will reduce or eradicate the disrespect which is the cornerstone of violence which concerns all of us. It is incumbent upon all of us to find out why there is this disrespect and increased violence. We must ascertain the causes and find the cure.

● (2100)

I shall spend some time on the next subject for discussion as it is extremely important and gives me some reason to hope. The United States authorities directed their attention to this matter back in 1968. A commission was appointed; it made certain recommendations which are still valid, and which still show how we are to attack the present malaise of society and what we must do to cure it. It suggested how we could reduce the increase in violence. Many of the recommendations the commission made apply to present day Canada and Canadians.

The President of the United States in June, 1968, ordered the establishment of a National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. I subscribe to the findings of the commission. They are still valid and apply to this debate. The commission was authorized to investigate and make recommendations with respect to (a) the causes and prevention of lawless acts of violence in our society, including assassination, murder and assault; (b) the causes and prevention of disrespect for law and order, of disrespect for public officials, and violent disruption of public order by individuals and groups.

The commission was composed of a cross section of many groups of citizens, black and white, male and female, young and old, of Republicans, Democrats, persons from the fields of education, law, religion, politics, psychology, history, labour and philosophy. The commission laboured for a year and a half and published its report on December 13, 1969. To me it was a work of monumental significance. Its impact was significant. I recommend its reading to hon. members and to the public at large. The final report of the U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence is available as a thick book. The conclusions are excellent.

The commission emphasized that two thirds of the American people lived in urban areas where violence thrives. Individual and group specialization have intensified our dependence on one another. Men are no longer capable of solitary living and individual self-defence. Men must live together and depend on one another to observe the laws and keep the peace. I suggest that those words