

*Criminal Code*

death penalty to become effective again simply by taking no action. But I would urge that we give this a chance, that we step into line with the progressive countries of the world which have already abolished the death penalty.

● (4:20 p.m.)

I know there are members in different parts of the house who do not agree about all the details, for example, about the full extent of abolishing capital punishment, but may I point out that we are not dealing with legislation. We are dealing with a resolution which simply sets forth certain principles. If the house expresses itself as being in favour of replacing the death penalty with life imprisonment, that will really mean life imprisonment unless the Governor in Council decides to the contrary. The government, I hope, will then bring down legislation. At that time we will be able to discuss the legislation and deal with the details of what the law will have to say.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** It must bring in legislation.

**Mr. Douglas:** Yes. If the resolution passes it will be mandatory on the government to bring down legislation, but the point I want to make is that when that legislation comes before the house it will be subject to amendment and refinement. This is not the time to resolve differences about details. The time to resolve them is when we have legislation before the house which can be discussed clause by clause in committee of the whole. At such a time the matter can be examined in greater detail.

What I plead for is that we pass this resolution tonight, with the amendment, which will declare in principle that the house is in favour of abolishing capital punishment and replacing it with life imprisonment. If we do that then I believe the House of Commons will have won a great victory, not a victory that will be accompanied by the blaring of trumpets or the rolling of drums but a victory in that we will have taken a forward, moral step and left behind one of the last relics of barbarianism. We will be moving forward to a more humane approach in dealing with crime.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Langlois (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening attentively for four days to hon. members who spoke either for or against abolishing the death penalty.

I intend to be very brief. I will make what will probably be the shortest speech in this

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debate. As a matter of fact, I will make only a few remarks.

To show where I stand, I must say right away that I am for retaining the death penalty.

One of the main points raised by those who are preaching abolition—and I repeat “who are preaching”—is that the death penalty is not a deterrent against murder. Therefore, how can we explain that robbers, allegedly armed, sometimes use toy guns or, even worse, unloaded guns?

Another point often raised is about statistics. What worries me a little is that statistics are chosen in this or that country depending on whether or not they are favorable to the discussion. Besides, I think that statistics can be made to say anything, depending on whether they are taken as a whole or only in part. In this debate, they have been used to mean all kinds of things but only in part.

The Holy Bible was also put to use. But there again, if you take the time you will find quotations which, on occasion, can serve both sides, either for or against abolishing the death penalty.

In reply to those who claim that abolition would make the difference between civilized and uncivilized society, I say that premeditated murder certainly constitutes a much more serious obstacle to that ideal of a civilized society.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the first duty of an hon. member is to protect society by always considering the common good. I feel deeply that voting in favour of abolition is not to serve the common interest and I say that for two main reasons:

First, to vote for the abolition of the death penalty is to give hired killers the assurance that they can, for money, kill all those they want, without ever having to fear that the same thing will happen to them.

Second, to vote for the abolition of the death penalty is to give to all those sentenced to life imprisonment a licence to kill as they please, either other prisoners or prison guards, especially when trying to escape.

Murder is by far the most odious of crimes. It certainly deserves the harshest punishment: the death penalty.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jean Wadds (Grenville-Dundas):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this debate I had some misgivings as to the timing of it, fearing that following on a rather emotional period in the house we might see further displays of