

Criminal Code

free man or woman—not your flesh and blood, not your breath and your beating heart, but your freedom, your right to live as a free citizen.

If, in the teeth of that warning, a man still chooses to kill another, he must be prepared to suffer the consequences. Certainly life imprisonment is harsh, but the deliberate killer, after all, would have had the choice and would have chosen. If it were not harsh, it would be no deterrent; society would not have the protection that a harsh deterrent provides. Perhaps in fact some killer living out a sentence of imprisonment for life might some day be paroled. I am not prepared to say that no single such killer ever would be paroled: But the possibility of parole should not be admitted or included in the life penalty, as I see it.

My strongest objection to the resolution as it appears on the order paper at the present time is in regard to paragraph (c). I would be in favour of a resolution that did not contain paragraph (c), because once the possibility of parole is admitted, even though in a humane heart and charitable spirit it must be there, once it is committed to print, the effect of the deterrent value of a sentence for life loses a great deal of its strength and a great deal of its sinew. As I have suggested, I see the life penalty as a means of abolishing the death penalty. Once you admit the possibility of parole, you take the teeth out of the life penalty as an effective deterrent.

• (8:10 p.m.)

So, I stand for a life penalty which contains, to all intents and purposes, no hope of parole. Before the classical abolitionists throw up their hands in horror, Mr. Speaker, let me remind them once again that we are talking here about killers who have chosen to kill knowing the penalty. We are talking also about law abiding men, women and children who have a right to be protected.

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo South): I join those who have spoken in this debate and wish to add my support for the abolition of capital punishment. I am convinced that capital punishment is not a proven deterrent or protection to society. On the contrary, through our reliance on this method, our view is distracted from the only real protection society can have, that is the prevention of crime itself. Like other members, I have not taken this position lightly. It is a grave responsibility that we all carry, and this

decision has not been reached without a struggle.

Like all members, I have received many letters regarding both abolition and retention. This morning, before entering the house, I received a letter which I should like to read. It is a letter in favour of retention, but I should like to read it because it strikes at the heart of the problem every abolitionist must consider. I quote:

Dear Mr. Saltzman:

Before you vote on the capital punishment question, I urge you to think long and hard about the little children who are innocent victims of sex murderers. Just try to imagine what these poor children have to endure before they are finally put to death—and they don't even have a fighting chance. So far, there has been only one member who mentioned the child victims. These are the most defenceless members of our society. How is it that so many men can dig up so many arguments in favour of prolonging the lives of these offenders, the lowest of the low?

As you know, after the initial wave of public revulsion, the case and circumstances are forgotten; then months later when a conviction is obtained, what a hue and cry for mercy is heard for these evil men. Have you ever studied their pictures? But it is barbaric to think that they should receive the ultimate punishment for the crimes they have committed. No, they must be rehabilitated and returned to society. And at what cost! As a taxpayer, I am infuriated that one cent of my tax money should be used to house and feed these most despicable creatures.

In recent speeches in the house, there was great concern for policemen and pen guards. Rightly so. But what about society at large . . . Those M.P.'s who abhor the rope might hold a very different opinion were they ever to witness the work of these monsters. The police have seen the victims. No wonder they are in favour of retaining capital punishment.

So much talk about the deterrent factor! Let us have justice. Spell it out plainly. If you take a life then you forfeit your own. Even the most stupid criminal should be able to understand those terms.

This letter, Mr. Speaker, has special significance for me, not only because it comes on the eve of a potential vote but it comes from a lady I admire greatly and who has been the teacher of my children. It is written, I am certain, with the sincerest motivation and concern. She poses a question that must be answered not only to her but to every child in this country. She asks, what protection do we afford the children of this nation?

If I thought that I could save lives by maintaining the death penalty, anybody's life, I would have to vote for the retention of capital punishment. There are many of us in this house who are not strangers to death. There are many in this house who have served in wars or served in other capacities