

which do not prove the case for retention. I, for one, do not feel that the personal opinions and intuitions of hon. members, unsupported by any real statistical evidence, are as persuasive as the thoroughly documented conclusions of the royal commission on capital punishment and the analytical findings of the many specialists who have concluded that capital punishment cannot be shown to be a unique deterrent to murder.

During the last debate in the house on the abolition of capital punishment, in late March and early April of 1966, 41 members spoke in favour of abolition and 57 spoke in favour of retention. At that time the retentionists relied on the traditional theories prevalent in English jurisprudence a century ago. The traditional theories expressed by those members who spoke in favour of retention were that capital punishment is a necessary deterrent, that society is protected by the removal of the offender and that the onus of reform is on those who favour abolition.

Perhaps I can best illustrate this conclusion by direct reference to some of the statements previously made by those who spoke in this house in favour of retention. The hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) in his speech asked:

Who could give the assurance to society that the convicted murderer would not repeat his crime?

The hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Woolliams) in his speech said:

I do not know whether capital punishment is a deterrent. I do not think anybody in this house can prove it is or not.

In the same speech he also said:

My heart is with the advocates of complete abolition...

The hon. member went on to say:

This is no time to mollycoddle those vicious, corrupt, evil men whose sole purpose is to destroy Canada and society.

The hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Horner) concluded his speech by asserting:

I certainly feel that if we in this house vote in favour of this resolution, we will be doing a disservice to society, and in fact weakening the moral fibre on which we depend so much to protect ourselves and the citizens of this country.

• (12:50 p.m.)

The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) said:

Capital punishment is necessary for the good of society.

Amendments Respecting Death Sentence

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) had this to say:

To say that the death penalty is no deterrent is to say that men do not fear death. This, to me, is incredible.

In this instance the hon. member missed the point. Men who plan murder do not expect to face death, as they do not expect to be caught.

Mr. Churchill: Will the hon. member accept a question? He quoted me a moment ago and then he said that men who commit murder do not fear the death penalty. How does he know?

Mr. Stafford: If the hon. member can assure me that when my time has expired the house will give me unanimous consent to continue, I would be glad to answer questions for as long as he likes. As things are, I shall hardly have time in which to finish my own speech.

Mr. Churchill: You evaded the point very well.

Mr. Stafford: I was about to quote the hon. member for Saint John-Albert (Mr. Bell) who said:

Capital punishment still represents necessary protection for our social order... If I have to choose between the protection of society and the convicted murderer, I am on the side of society.

Here the hon. member missed the point. We are all on the side of society. It is like saying that we are all for motherhood. There is an alternative to the death sentence—life imprisonment.

The hon. member for Prince Edward-Lennox (Mr. Alkenbrack) stated:

My constituents did not send me to Ottawa to sit in this parliament in order to weaken or to tear down the Statutes of Canada by doing away with any of these laws.

This hon. member too missed the point. He was sent here to amend and strengthen the laws. He said further:

This is Canada, 1966; if we grant too much leniency and liberty within the social system our political system will suffer, and possibly perish.

I say this is Canada, 1967. I say that we must cast aside the antiquated arguments, theories and ideas of the retentionists and apply to this present-day problem a reasoning based upon modern concepts of criminology and sociology. Today we have a wealth of research and information at our immediate disposal on which to base reform, and we need not and should not retain our