

since the House took the step of abolishing capital punishment, to suggest that in any way the decision that was made at that time was wrong? I suggest that the answer to that question is very clearly no, that in 1976 the House made the only possible decision on that fundamental question.

The House is not alone in being asked to consider the issue of capital punishment. In 1983, the United Kingdom Parliament was asked to reconsider the decision that was made on the question of capital punishment. The United Kingdom Parliament, dominated by Conservative Members of Parliament, headed by a Prime Minister who strongly supported capital punishment, overwhelmingly voted down the suggestion that capital punishment be reinstated in the United Kingdom.

I wish to quote from Jim McGrath on this issue. He now is serving with distinction as the Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland. Last year he said this:

—does Canada, with its new and enlightened Constitution, want to turn back the clock on progress and be one of the very few democracies to restore capital punishment? Why stop at capital punishment, why not restore corporal punishment? We have to ask ourselves what this would do to Canadian society and to Canadian jurisprudence. Do we as a nation join South Africa, the U.S.S.R., China, and the State of Alabama in imposing the death penalty on its citizens?

That is the question that Jim McGrath asked in 1986. That is the question that we, as Members of Parliament, must address today.

The Hon. Member for Peterborough made some remarks about deterrents, and talked about statistics. We do not have the time to look at the statistics. There are a couple of remarks that I wish to make about deterrents.

It is interesting to note that the President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Chief Robert Lunney of the Edmonton Police Department, has said this, and I quote: "It is futile to base an argument on reinstatement of capital punishment on the grounds of deterrence". It is also interesting to note that the largest number of deaths of police officers in Canada occurred in 1962, the last year that human beings were executed in Canada.

I mentioned the U.S.S.R. and the fact that the Soviet Union still has the death penalty. It is interesting to quote from an individual who is respected worldwide on this question, and that is Andrei Sakharov, who said:

I regard the death penalty as a savage and immoral institution that undermines the moral and legal foundations of a society. I reject the notion that the death penalty has any essential deterrent effect on potential offenders. I am convinced that the contrary is true—that savagery begets only savagery.

That, Mr. Speaker, was said by Andrei Sakharov.

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

**Mr. Robinson:** Let us listen to some of the victims of crime and their families. One of the most powerful statements that was made in 1976 during the debate on capital punishment was by Pauline Maitland, the widow of a police officer who was slain in Toronto, when she said:

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I learned—that the man who killed my husband, P.C. Leslie Maitland, last February 1st, has now been sentenced to death. I would like you to know that the views of myself and my husband's family on capital punishment remain unchanged. We are totally against it. It would not bring Leslie back and it is too easy a way out for all of us. Society condemns murder, but is willing to accept the murder of this man in the name of justice. Please do what you can to prevent this second crime before it is too late. The killing of this man would be completely foreign to all the moral standards of both my late husband and myself.

As my colleague for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) says, then there is Donald Marshall, who served 11 years in prison for a murder that he did not commit. I ask each and every Member of this House, would you be prepared to stand and explain to the family of a man or a woman who was murdered by mistake that we are sorry, an error was made, but we cannot reverse that error?

Mistakes have been made. I have a copy here of a newspaper article with the headline, "Innocent Man to Go Free". This man was cleared of killings after nine years. If we were to reinstate capital punishment in this country, innocent men would not go free, because they would have been sent to their deaths.

The Hon. Member for Peterborough has said that we are not giving the abolitionists a forum. They have raised \$50,000 because they wish to speak on capital punishment. I wish to say to the Hon. Member for Peterborough that it is not they who have chosen to speak on capital punishment. It is not the Church Councils that have put capital punishment on the political agenda. It is he and his fellow killers, and they are only responding to a lust for blood and revenge. They have not chosen to spend their money on this important issue; far be it from them to put this on the political agenda. No, Mr. Speaker. Those groups in Canada, including the Anglican Church of Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Lutheran Church in Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Pope himself who has spoken out strongly against capital punishment, believe that rather than talking about revenge and lust for blood, we should be talking about preventing violent crime and not contributing to more deaths in Canada.

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

**Mr. Robinson:** The arguments against capital punishment are clear and compelling. We must look at the prevention of violent crime. We must look at the whole question of gun control in our society. We must look at far more effective programs for dealing with young offenders, for pro-active rather than reactive police work, and better trained, better deployed, and better equipped police forces. We must look at profound changes to our prison system. We must work in our communities with organizations such as churches, schools, the labour movement, and others to prevent violent crime.

All of us in the Chamber share the concern for the protection of society. In closing, I wish to quote an editorial from *The Globe and Mail* on this subject, which I think very