

Capital Punishment

That the Striking Committee be empowered to name the Members of the special committee, provided that once the Striking Committee report is laid upon the Table, it shall be deemed concurred in;

That the special committee have the power to sit while the House is sitting and during periods when the House stands adjourned;

That the special committee be empowered to report from time to time and send for persons and papers, and to print such papers and evidence from time to time as may be ordered by the committee and to retain the services of expert, technical, professional and clerical staff;

That the special committee be empowered to adjourn from place to place inside Canada and that, when deemed necessary, the appropriate staff accompany the committee;

That a quorum of the special committee be eight (8) members for any vote, resolution or other decision; and that the chairman be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and authorize the printing thereof whenever six (6) members are present;

That any substitution of membership on the special committee be made pursuant to Standing Order 94(4); and

That, notwithstanding the usual practices of this House, if the House is not sitting when the special committee is ready to issue its final report and the said bill, the special committee shall present its report and the bill to the House by filing them with the Clerk of the House provided that the report shall then be deemed to have been laid upon the Table, and the bill shall then be deemed, pursuant to Standing Order 107(1), to have been introduced at the first sitting of the House thereafter and to stand on the Order Paper in the name of the special committee chairman, for first reading at the next sitting of the House; and that subsequent House stages of the bill be considered under "Government Orders", with the bill standing under the heading "Government Business".

Mr. Speaker: Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom).

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate today—

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I move:

That the Member for Ontario (Mr. Fennell) be now heard.

Mr. Nystrom: I was speaking.

Mr. Speaker: On Orders of the Day, resuming debate was called and the Chair recognized the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) who, in the opinion of the Chair, was clearly speaking.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member has risen and moved a traditional motion that another Member be now heard.

It is important that all Hon. Members and the public that is watching understand exactly what this procedure is, because it is a very difficult one for the Chair.

I am going to refer to what the procedural law is in this matter so that there is no misunderstanding. I am referring to a ruling of Speaker Sauve on October 27, 1983. It is as follows:

—Members may on a point of order ask that an Hon. Member be now heard as long as no other Member has the floor legitimately. Beauchesne states that a motion that a Member be now heard must be moved before the Member recognized has begun speaking. If the Member recognized has simply said "Madam Speaker," that is enough to be in possession of the House and, therefore, under those circumstances a motion that another Member be now heard is not in order.

● (1150)

There is always a difficulty for the Chair in these cases, because there is what amounts to a physical contest for the floor. However, in this case, clearly the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) had begun to speak, and I must advise the Hon. Member that he is out of order. The Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville has the floor.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, what we are dealing with today is a very important decision about the future of our country. Our decision will tell us how civilized our country is and what kind of country it will be for our kids.

Many Canadians have said there should be capital punishment. They say that because there is a lot of crime. They see violence on television and hear about it all the time. For these reasons I want to ask the Canadian people and my fellow Members of Parliament about 12 questions today with respect to whether or not we should reinstate capital punishment.

The most important question, of course, is if capital punishment is a deterrent, is it going to protect our society? Even those who believe in capital punishment have never been able to prove that it is a deterrent. They have not been able to prove it is a deterrent in this country, or in any other country. Therefore, if it is not a deterrent, why do people want to bring back capital punishment? If capital punishment is not a deterrent, then why bring it back?

I suggest the only reason for bringing back capital punishment is pure and simple revenge. It is vengeance. It is a belief that we must have an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It is a belief that if someone robs you, you have the right to rob them. It is a belief that if someone were to punch you in the eye, you have the right to punch them in the eye. It is pure revenge. It is a vengeful vendetta. I suggest that basing the argument for capital punishment on revenge and retribution is not right.

My third question asks, if we bring back capital punishment, what kind of society will we have in this great country of ours called Canada? What kind of society will we be if we give the state the legal right to take a life, the right to kill someone? I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that would not be a very nice society.

Bringing back capital punishment may indeed provoke even more murders, even more violence and killing. In his speech the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney) outlined in detail some statistics on what we call the brutalization effect, that is, when a state legally kills someone it can provoke someone who is sick and demented to go out and kill someone or commit an act of violence.

The Hon. Member in his speech before the House cited some studies made in New York State and in South Carolina where indeed when the state did murder someone, there was concrete evidence that it provoked more killings and violence in those particular states. That evidence proves that there is a strong chance that if we bring back killing by the state, capital punishment, all we will do is create more violence and murder.