

in small rooms. But is that a solution? Is that the way to cure them? Years ago, people felt that this was the solution. But today, have we considered all possibilities? Why do some people kill? If scientists can study and develop the technology to travel to the moon and throughout the universe, why can they not find out why some people kill instead of us wasting so much time and energy reinstating capital punishment in Canada after 15 years?

Mr. Speaker, I believe in life. I suggest that all human beings should be the right to live, even after committing a murder. It is our responsibility, as a society and as well-adjusted human beings, to find ways to help the murderer and to cure him, to protect both him and society, and not simply by locking him up to show him that everything is over, but maybe by trying to rehabilitate him. And it is my view, Mr. Speaker, that with all the scientific progress accumulated to date, if we really took the trouble, if we used all the publicity enjoyed by this debate—and this is something I have been repeating for two and a half years, how many times have I been asked by the press whether I was for or against the death penalty. If we put all the emphasis enjoyed by the death penalty on finding a solution as to how to protect our society, how to rehabilitate and cure the people who kill, I think we would have a better society. This is where we should apply an ongoing effort, put all our energies to find a solution in the hope that some day our society will be better.

Mr. Speaker, of course this debate is very emotional. People who support capital punishment come up with examples—children that were killed, very young innocent children and women, all sorts of crimes that are really unacceptable. Of course there is no acceptable crime, but those crimes are most horrible. With capital punishment, they would like to say—Well, we found that individual guilty, we sent him to the gallows, the problem is solved. I do not think the problem is solved. First, we must ensure whether the convicted individual was the guilty one. How many people sentenced to die were innocent! Our judicial system is a human system, therefore subject to human error. There is that aspect. Think of the jury or the judge who sentenced someone to die and found a few years later they had erred. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, what their lives must be. So, the equation must be made on both side of the coin.

Those are horrible events, criminal acts with loss of life, but on the other side there is also the possibility of error. That has happened in history. Therefore, when someone says the solution is the death penalty, my answer is no, because statistics once more prove the opposite. Although some countries have capital punishment, the crime rate has not decreased. And here in Canada, the crime rate has not increased since we abolished capital punishment 15 years ago. We must therefore ask the question: Is that the right solution, and should we really, as a modern society, go over what was done 15 years ago, because this debate already took place twice in this House? Why should we, Mr. Speaker? I put it to

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you: Why should we have this debate at this point, rather than debating our judicial system, looking at our Criminal Code, bringing in real reforms to our penitentiary system? That is the kind of debate we should have, Mr. Speaker, and that is where we should begin instead of moving backward. We are not making any progress, we are regressing.

[*English*]

What are the alternatives? How can we reduce the number of murders? No one, not even the most staunch supporter of the death penalty, argues that its reinstatement will prevent all murders. The declared aim is to reduce the murder rate. If our society is serious about that goal we must resist the temptation to adopt measures such as the death penalty which are illusory. Instead, our support must be directed toward effective alternatives.

[*Translation*]

We must find better alternatives. We must make sure that our criminals are put away until they are rehabilitated in order to protect society. Nowadays, of course, Canadians are concerned. It is true that they are asking for protection. Opinion polls indicate that quite clearly. However, as I said, Mr. Speaker, what they want is not the reinstatement of capital punishment but a more fair and equitable society that would reflect the history of mankind. And when at the beginning I said that I was sad, Mr. Speaker, I am really sad. For the past 15 years, since Parliament abolished capital punishment, we have made considerable scientific progress. We have sent human beings on the moon, we are exploring outer space, we have heart transplants and we have made so many incredible and marvelous scientific discoveries. How is it that after 15 years, we have to come back to capital punishment and have no other alternative than going backward?

This is not progress but regression. And on this issue, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to try to convince my colleagues that the reinstatement of capital punishment is not the best direction to take, but that we should find a better system and look at the structure of our penal and rehabilitation systems. Perhaps it is true, Mr. Speaker, that our rehabilitation system should be closely examined. It often happens that people undergoing rehabilitation commit other crimes. We have to consider the whole question. However, capital punishment would not solve those problems. It often happens that a murderer does not think about capital punishment. He is not a normal person.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to tell my colleagues that I will vote against the reinstatement of capital punishment.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, I wish first of all to congratulate the Hon. Member for Saint-Léonard—Anjou (Mr. Gagliano) for his speech and for saying that he is against the reinstatement of capital punishment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member a question on the way capital punishment is applied in Canada.