

*Criminal Code*

It is neither humiliating nor degrading for a society to retain the death penalty in its statute books when that same society has to recognize that organized or syndicated crimes exists in its midst and that gang killings are numerous.

I am ready to open the Bible and read one of God's commandments: "Thou shalt not kill". It applies to all. And in spite of what the hon. member for Stanstead (Mr. Forest) said this afternoon, I would like the criminals to start respecting it. Abolitionists talk at length about the murderers' right to live; but what about the right of the innocent victims sacrificed or who would be sacrificed in the future?

What the potential murderer is most afraid of is having to pay with his life for the life he will have taken.

There is talk about possible judicial errors but not a single case was quoted to make us feel sorry.

The real known judicial errors are those where our judiciary, through compassion, allowed criminals to regain their freedom and later commit odious murders.

Leopold Dion enjoyed the mercy of the state. If justice had been allowed to take its course, four more young men would be alive today. If fear is the beginning of wisdom, fear of the death penalty will surely influence anyone who has premeditated or is premeditating a crime.

Whoever is premeditating a crime must be made to fear that he will pay with his life for that of the innocent he is trying to sacrifice; he must not feel that if he does it, he can also have his sentence commuted.

Commutations in themselves destroy the deterrent factor of the death penalty. There was a time in Quebec when Leopold Dion would have been killed on sight by the people because of their deep resentment against such odious criminals.

That man took young lives, he cowardly killed four children, one after the other, and in so doing, he killed the courage, morale and strength of the families concerned. And people will say that it is society that corrupted him; I would rather say that he laughed at society, he was granted all the remissions he begged for.

Commutation by the crown goes back to ancient times when kings, more concerned with their magnanimity and renown, reprieved criminals in special circumstances. In my opinion, this concept distorts the judicial

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power and weakens the efficiency of our courts.

Without raising air-tight barriers between the public powers, let us say that it does not rest with legislators to downgrade their own laws. They have the power to amend, to repeal or to strengthen them.

Nowadays, when a man is sentenced, people say: he will not serve his sentence.

When reference is made to miscarriages of justice,—and I shall return to it—I say: To refrain from carrying out a death sentence through fear of a miscarriage of justice is not worth maintaining capital punishment through fear that otherwise there will be further innocent victims. At least, I for one am not ready to run this risk.

Instead of being beneficial to society, murder trials become soap operas. Instead of showing murder in all its ugliness, the accused becomes the leading actor, if not the hero of a story in which minor details and excitement exceed or obliterate the atrocity committed.

How many opportunities are lost to educate society usefully. The horror of the crime committed gives way to the behaviour of the accused; the innocent victim and the grief of the survivors are replaced by the emotions of the crowd, the attitude of the jury. Emotion takes precedence over reason, and the society which would have agreed before to do away with the accused, weeps the next day over the sad plight of the poor man being condemned to death.

Instead of being confronted with all his unforgivable failures and his unconcern for others, our society, in short, has lived through a marvelous thriller. And as all emotions are of a fleeting nature, everything will be forgotten the next day, pending the next instalment.

Before dreaming of an ideal society, let us first consider the following problems:

Slum removal; social disparities; the urgent need for social organizations for young people ranging from 12 to 20 years of age; the social integration of young people; the elimination of hate literature, especially that which undermines authority; the elimination of murder movies and crime gadgets; respect for civic and judiciary powers.

Being convinced that there is direct link between crime and the corresponding forms of punishment, I am against the abolition of capital punishment, thus reflecting the opinion of nearly all my constituents.