

*Capital Punishment*

**Mr. Cardin:** I did not intend to review the decision of the house. What I am saying is that it seems to me rather strange for hon. members to be able to speak about other bills that are on the order paper—

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the hon. member persists in that line I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

**Mr. Cardin:** I can understand the difficulty in which the government finds itself on this particular issue because as the result of the government's commutation of 32 out of 40 of the sentences of persons condemned in the past three years it is apparent that the government had at least a strong tendency toward the abolition of capital punishment without waiting for the results of this debate and the discussion in which we are engaged tonight. Nor would it be at all surprising if the majority of the house and, indeed, the majority of Conservative members voted against the abolition of capital punishment.

**An hon. Member:** Wait for the vote and get on with your speech.

**Mr. Cardin:** I say that because the choice given to the house in this bill is neither complete, fair nor realistic at this time. Indeed in my opinion it is no easier to vote on this bill than it would be for a member to vote on the question whether he likes it better in the winter or in the country.

Of course, there are alternatives and it is indeed in the alternatives that I believe the most practicable solution to the problem will be found.

Another question before us is, of course, whether capital punishment is or is not a deterrent to murder, and I must confess that I was not particularly impressed or convinced even by the statistical arguments which have been put forward by those who are in favour of abolition. I cannot help but feel that the immediate abolition of capital punishment at this time might cause those who might otherwise be more careful to be more trigger happy and more careless of the lives of their fellow men, and I for one am unwilling to take that risk. Nor would I like to see the abolition of capital punishment without having made a serious and, indeed, a successful effort to achieve effective control, restriction and banning of lethal weapons in the hands of individual citizens other than those which might be considered as sporting weapons. To me that would be a necessary precaution and, indeed, a condition upon which I might agree to the abolition of capital punishment.

One of the strongest arguments in favour of the retention of capital punishment is, I believe, to be found in the fact that the

[Mr. Speaker.]

government which apparently did all it possibly could to be merciful toward those condemned to be hung found that the nature of the crimes committed by eight of the 40 persons condemned to die did not warrant commutation of the sentence of death.

It is not difficult, I am sure, for hon. members to imagine crimes other than treason and piracy mentioned in the bill in respect to which, in the interest of society as a whole, capital punishment would not only be morally justified but indeed warranted.

I feel that even after full discussion has taken place on this bill it would be premature and unwise to vote for the abolition of the death penalty at this time and in the circumstances and for these reasons I have no alternative but to vote against the bill now before the house and hope that the government will bring in a more realistic measure on this very subject in the near future.

**Mr. F. E. Lennard (Wentworth):** Mr Speaker, I rise for a moment this evening to oppose this bill. The cases both for and against this bill have been brilliantly and thoroughly put forward by other hon. members who have spoken this afternoon and this evening. I do not have the brilliance to present the situation in the capable way those hon. gentlemen did nor do I intend to resort to any repetition of the arguments.

It has been stated that capital punishment and stiff sentences are not a deterrent. I take issue with that statement. If I may be allowed some latitude in making a personal reference, I should like to speak about a personal recollection of an event that occurred in the city of Hamilton some few years ago. The late Magistrate Burbidge was then in office. During his tenure of office we had several bank robberies without violence in which the robbers were caught. He gave such severe sentences that there was not another bank robbery in Hamilton during the remainder of his term of office, if my memory serve me correctly.

I promised not to detain the house this evening and so I shall make brief reference to a statement I made last Sunday night during the course of a radio broadcast over Hamilton station. On that occasion I said:

Capital punishment is a deterrent and I am against doing away with it. I feel that if capital punishment were eliminated in this country it would become a battleground for all the thugs in our neighbouring countries. They could move in here with their victims and do their slaughtering in Canada because what does a life sentence mean? It means imprisonment for 10 to 12 to 15 years, and in some cases I have known them to be out in 8. Another thing which must always be borne in mind is that our police forces would have practically no protection whatever in going about their duties, and a policeman is as dear to