

be true. If it is true I feel that most citizens in this country, and certainly I, would like to see the most humane punishment possible instituted, and some provision should be made for a person to choose a death sentence if that is his wish.

There is a fourth point which also involves a basic premise that I feel needs to be considered by members of the House. The laws of this country should reflect the same degree of compassion and consideration for the families of the victims of murders as for the criminals themselves. There is a feeling in this country today that we in parliament appear to have more concern for the welfare of criminals than for the welfare of their victims or their victims' families. On that basis I feel the amendments serve the purpose of recognizing these four tenets or premises.

I should say at the outset that as Canadians we have always felt that to be humane was one of our cardinal rules for life in society in Canada. Neither do we want to submit prisoners to any unnecessary cruelties. We in Canada also want to protect the public against any unnecessary hazard or risk that could fall their way.

I submit that Bill C-84 fails in several respects to meet these basic needs of the Canadian people. I sense this from talking to many constituents in my riding. During the last few weeks many have spoken to me and are very disappointed at the stand I took on capital punishment. I have stood very firm, explaining to them that I have a strong and intense inner feeling that it is wrong for the state to order the taking of a person's life. Many of my constituents respect my view even though they do not agree with it. But those same constituents are very quick to point out that we in parliament do not seem to be giving enough attention to the protection of society; hence one reason for these amendments. If I can elaborate on this point, Mr. Speaker, amendments Nos. 4, 9, 18 and 38 do exactly that.

What I am trying to do by way of these four amendments is to put some teeth into Bill C-84 in order to protect society against a few criminals. I would be the first to admit that everybody in society can make a mistake once, and I would be the first to give that recognition even to a person who commits first or second degree murder. I feel that such a person may be able to mend his ways with appropriate help, and that this is a sound approach to take.

On the other hand I have an entirely different feeling toward those people who have been given a second chance yet commit the same or a similar offence a second time, whether it be first degree or second degree murder. I have then very little sympathy for them. More than that, Mr. Speaker, I feel that such people have proven not only to themselves but to the citizens of this country, and to us as parliamentarians, that they are unable to learn a lesson. I think that society deserves to be protected against the sort of person in society who cannot learn a lesson. There is no provision in Bill C-84 as presently worded to correct this situation. I submit that by providing that such people spend the rest of their days in prison, this is the best way to protect society against a repeat performance on the part of someone who has already shown he will not learn a lesson. That is one of the main reasons that I feel motion No. 18 is essential.

Capital Punishment

In addition to that, I abhor the idea of the state taking the decision to invoke capital punishment. I feel that such action is inhumane. It is not the actual carrying out of the death penalty because there are other ways that are not inhumane at all. But the decision on the part of the state to take somebody's life is, in my view, unacceptable.

On the other hand I have practised medicine long enough to see plenty of cases of people who cannot tolerate any prolongation of their lives, and one cannot help but have sympathy for them when they are successful in taking their own lives in one way or another. We as physicians, all have inbred and inculcated into us the desire always to save lives, and that is what we do. There is an inner feeling that I certainly have as a physician, that when a person has tried several times, yet because of the failure or the inability of medical science to help them, the kindest thing is to have sympathy for that person when he is eventually successful. It is because of this that I feel some of these criminals are virtually in that state of mind and personally want to commit suicide. They are deranged people or they probably would not be attempting suicide. Out of kindness, compassion and humaneness we should at least provide them with the option if they wish no longer to continue living that kind of life in prison for the rest of their days.

● (2130)

Many people have said it is worse to be in prison for the rest of one's life than it is to be dead. I am not in a position to argue that one way or the other. I do not know the answer, but I am prepared to accept the fact that for some people it may well be true.

I should like to see this bill make provision that if an individual wishes to be relieved of his suffering in this world he can indeed be relieved of that suffering in a humane way. Of course that is the purpose of my final motion, No. 38, which is consequential on the other three. I have suggested that these three amendments are quite similar. I want to go on in a bit of detail about the fact that we have to consider a repeat murderer in order to protect society against further repetition.

Let me refer briefly to the other two amendments which deal with acts of piracy and high treason. Perhaps others would like to add to that list such things as kidnapping with force and so on. I was interested last night in the committee hearing on this bill. When I put this same proposal to the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) he made one point that I thought was very significant. It was a point I had not been aware of, and not being in possession of the minutes of that meeting I will essentially have to paraphrase what the minister said, and I certainly will accept correction if what I suggest is wrong.

The minister took as an example those people who commit the act of piracy and intimated that studies had shown that these people seem to have some derangement of mind making them unamenable to the point that they cannot accept any type of deterrent. I would be the first to agree with the Solicitor General that this is probably true. There are those few people who are deranged mentally in a way that we do not really understand fully in a medical-scientific way. They have the emotional drive to commit some act of piracy, or some similar act which is abhorrent to society. There is no effective type of deterrent, even