

# McGEE WILL REINTRODUCE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BILL



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A Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament, who in 1959 introduced a bill for abolition of the death penalty, told Dalhousie law students last week that he will re-introduce the bill at the next session of parliament.

Frank McGee, member for Toronto's York-Scarborough constituency, told the students "capital punishment has not been and can not be demonstrated to be a unique deterrent."

The 34-year-old MP visited Dalhousie as part of a tour of Canadian universities. He was accompanied by local MP Edmund Morris.

"Whether or not capital punishment will be done away with in our time is now up to you and how you handle the issue," he said.

### Remove Emotion

"When I speak of abolition," he said, "I am motivated neither by sympathy for a murderer, nor lack of sympathy for his victim. I think it is important to take as much emotion as possible out of the question."

Mr. McGee told the students of his involvement in two successive murder trials as a juror, in which he was confronted with the death sentence. This had led to an extensive reconsideration of the matter, and later to his inauguration of a parliamentary debate on the subject.

"The impact of the emotional ingredient had a profound effect on the members," he said. "I don't think this element should be allowed to form a fundamental basis for a law."

### Compromise

Mr. McGee said it seemed likely if the bill was re-introduced a compromise solution could be found.

"In the course of my study on the subject," he said, "I have reached several basic and intentionally

unemotional arguments in favor of abolition of the death penalty."

People felt, he said, that the very existence of the ultimate penalty daily prevented murder, but in the light of much evidence, abolition has seen a reduction in the "murder rate."

"The main motivation for maintaining the penalty," he said, "is a natural human desire for revenge, but our laws must be based on something more stable than revenge and fear."

"Society cannot inscribe in its members a fundamental reverence for life if it sets the reverse example."

He added: "Capital punishment has a demoralizing and degrading effect on anybody who has anything to do with it."

"We persist in continuing a form of punishment in which juries are increasingly reluctant to bring in a sentence which will mean death."

### Mistakes Made

"And finally," he said, "there is the most obvious argument: mistakes have been made in the past and mistakes will be made in the future. The files are thick with cases where serious doubt of a person's guilt has been evidenced, and where an actual mistake in conviction has been proven."

Mr. McGee said he did not believe "locking a person up for life and throwing away the key" would serve as a logical alternative to the death penalty.

"However," he concluded, "I find it hard to believe that in this age of great scientific advance, and in an age where we have already solved the problem of dealing with mental patients who would probably kill anybody, we cannot solve a simple problem of security."

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### Le Cercle To Meet

The next meeting of "Le Cercle Francais" will take place on Monday, November 21st, at 7:30 p.m., in the Women's Common Room of the Arts and Administration Building. The program will include French songs, a talk by Madame Robinson of the French Department, and an illustrated talk by Professor Boyd, who will show coloured slides taken in Brussels during the World Fair, 1958. Refreshments will be served. All those interested in French are cordially invited to attend.

### JANES—

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Prof. Janes said Britain had established big new universities in Nigeria, Rhodesia and Uganda within the past few years. He said Africans were displaying a tremendous urge for education, and these universities were playing a major role in their countries.

Turning to South Africa, Prof. Janes said the whites in South Africa could be sympathized with to a point. He pointed out that the Dutch had landed in South Africa at the same time as the British landed in Newfoundland, and the British had been in South Africa since the early 1800's.

"South Africa has been their home for generations and it is difficult for them to leave," he said. He also said there was no doubt that the complicated 20th century civilization that had been built up would disintegrate if handed over to the Africans just like that.

He also said that more was being done for Africans in South Africa than anywhere else, and, oddly enough, more was being done under the present government than ever before.

However, he said that the attitude of apartheid in South Africa was foolish in the extreme, for it was inevitable that in places where the Africans were in the great majority that they would eventually gain control.

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INTERVIEWS

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