

Criminal Code

is very much less than it is in the state of Maine. The only reason I quote from statistics is to give examples, because I want to show how the same figures exactly can be taken, and for the uninformed person who is listening, those figures will prove either side of the case.

My colleague from Royal (Mr. Fairweather) mentioned the situation in Maine and in New Brunswick. The only reason I mention it is because I heard this subject mentioned on the radio on Sunday. The commentators on the radio said that what the hon. member for Royal had pointed out constituted a great argument in favour of abolition; that the murder rates in these two areas next door to each other with similar types of population, and so on, were practically the same, although in Maine there is no death penalty and in New Brunswick there is.

However, look at the statistics provided about the states of South Dakota and North Dakota. These two states are more alike than are Maine and New Brunswick. The populations are very similar in their ethnic origins. They are the same in their general means of getting a livelihood, and so on. It is just an accident that the states of South Dakota and North Dakota are not one state. If you look at the murder rate of these states, you will see a considerable difference, which illustrates once again how impossible it is to take statistics for two areas next door to each other and try to prove anything from them. In many cases there is just no relationship between statistics. The figures may be found on pages 116 and 117 of the book on capital punishment. The same sort of thing holds true, if you go right through the figures.

If you look at the rates for different countries on page 86, you will find El Salvador with the highest rate, with 44.3 murders per hundred thousand. It has the death penalty. The next two countries, in order of murder rate are Colombia, with 15.9 and Puerto Rico with 14.1. Both these countries are without the death penalty.

What do these kinds of statistics prove? I think they simply prove that this is not a means by which you can determine whether the death penalty is a deterrent or whether it is not.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the best way to determine this, and the best way for any hon. member to determine this is to examine what his own reactions are to different situations, and then to observe what other people's reactions are, and to apply common sense. I

[Mr. Harkness.]

submit when you begin to apply that type of test to the particular question which we are debating that you will realize right away how you, yourself, are very subject to deterrents because of the fear of punishment of some sort or other. Is there any single person here who throughout his school days was not prevented practically, every day during the whole period he went to school from committing some offence against the regulations because of fear of punishment? This problem that we discuss is just as simple. I think there is no question at all but that everybody is deterred from actions of all kinds throughout his life because of the fear of consequences.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the greatest fear of any, and therefore the greatest deterrent of any is the fear of death. Anyone who has crouched in a ditch or shallow trench with a lot of shell and machine-gun fire going on around him realizes how strong the fear of death is. Anyone who tries to persuade me, and who tries to persuade the majority of people that the fear of death is not much greater than the fear of life imprisonment, is not going to get very far with his argument.

We have the argument that life imprisonment is a great deterrent.

Mr. Lewis: Would the hon. member answer a question?

Mr. Harkness: I will answer it when I have finished.

It is argued that life imprisonment is as great a deterrent as hanging, that the fear of life imprisonment is just as great, and will therefore serve as just as effective a deterrent as capital punishment. I submit that fear of life imprisonment is nothing like as great a deterrent as is the fear of death, because a man sentenced to life imprisonment knows that in most cases he is going to be paroled; in other words, he still has hope. First of all, he has the hope of parole and in most cases people who have been sentenced to life imprisonment have been paroled. Second, he has the hope of escape. With these twin hopes of parole and escape, the fear of life imprisonment, and thus the deterrent effect of life imprisonment, is nothing like as great as the fear of death.

An hon. Member: Let us take the vote.

Mr. Harkness: I should like to point out also, and I will not dwell on this very long because it has been pointed out many times before, that capital punishment is used at the