

Amendments Respecting Death Sentence

murder and we are going to protect them from capital punishment?

I say, Mr. Speaker, that the death penalty is the most important argument for dissuading those crime syndicates that have no other profession, and live off their crimes. I say that the people of the province of Quebec are concerned. Go meet your electors, members from the province of Quebec; you will see that our people feel apprehensive about this bill, they feel insecure, they wonder where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, these days, for the sake of stealing \$5 or \$10, one does not hesitate to turn a family of seven or eight into the street. It happened in Montreal. A taxi driver was murdered in order to steal \$5 or \$10 from him. It sometimes happens that five or six children are left homeless as a result of murder.

We are here to protect society, and if criminal themselves do not exhibit any sign of rehabilitation, I do not think we should show them any sympathy. If they show any desire to be rehabilitated, to live within an organized society such as ours, we might be inclined toward greater sympathy for them.

Mr. Speaker, I wish also to support the proposal—I had it here, in my notes—made this afternoon by the hon. member for Lotbinière as to a compensation fund for the victims of criminals. In 1967, in a modern society such as ours, I think we should have an adequate compensation fund for assisting—as I said a few months ago—orphans left homeless just because a gangster or a gunman killed a man, the sole support of a family, for a mere \$10.

But we must go farther than that, and I think that is the mistake of the laws contained in our statute books. We should deal with the root of the evil and set up appropriate mechanisms to fight juvenile delinquency.

During my leisure time, I still have the opportunity to go to court. Every time I attend a sitting of the court of sessions of the peace, I see about ten young people, between the ages of 10 and 20. Some of them are appearing before the court for the third time at 17. Of course, if these young people are not rehabilitated, if we do not have the means to help them, to keep in touch with them, to give them good advice and to find them employment, these people will certainly become the murderers of tomorrow. It is not when they reach 40 that we should, in my opinion, think of rehabilitating hardened criminals. An article which I read recently

[Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix).]

concerning the psychiatric care provided in penitentiaries for hardened criminals said that when a man reaches 35 or 40 years of age, psychiatry can no longer help him. Therefore, I think the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces, should organize to fight juvenile delinquency effectively. That is where we must begin, at the root of the evil.

Of course, one cannot always lay the blame at the door of parents and say that it is solely their responsibility. There are cases where the parents cannot intervene and, I repeat, it is then up to society to provide efficient means to prevent juvenile delinquency in the country. That is the only way to build an honest society made up of honest people.

Before closing my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a final suggestion. Everyone knows that the matter under consideration is extremely important. It will have widespread social repercussions, it will also have an impact on established order, on social order. I wonder whether, instead of submitting, for the second time, this bill to the approval of the house or to a free vote of the hon. members, the government should not have determined through a referendum, the views of the people of Canada with respect to the abolition of capital punishment as advocated by the Solicitor General of Canada? If our people are as concerned as they seem to be, I think they ought to be consulted on a question of such momentous importance.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that each member of this house will conscientiously face up to his responsibilities when the question of the abolition of capital punishment is put to the house. I think each of us will have to act not only having regard to the implications of the bill now under consideration, but bearing in mind also the protection which the community expects from the legislation passed in this house. This is why I cannot accept the bill introduced as a compromise by the Solicitor General and I will not change my mind; I will vote for the retention of capital punishment.

• (4:20 p.m.)

[*English*]

Hon. John N. Turner (Registrar General): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this very urgent debate with a great deal of personal feeling—