

## Death penalty should be abolished permanently

On December 27 of last year, the government's five-year ban on the death penalty expired. Since then, great debate has arisen in the House of Commons over what is a purely moral issue. (ie., we either sanction killing people, or we don't).

It's as simple as that.

The government - perhaps because it is in a precarious position - has refused to take a stand on the issue. For better or worse, it has decided that all members are to vote as they please, and not along any dictated party lines.

As a result of this decision there has been some very interesting debate in the House, with some members predicting a vast increase in the murder rate if we drop capital punishment.

It's an interesting point.

But it's false. The ban on the death penalty has proven that no murder increase can be expected simply because the penalty of death is no longer legal. The threat of death has not proven to be any deterrent in the past; there has been no indication that it will ever be at some point in the future.

The great worry of those opposed to the abolition of the penalty is that society will not be protected, but become vulnerable to even more killings. Some have suggested that the Bible endorses such a penalty - this, we feel, borders on the absurd.

Human life must be sacred - for man to survive as a being there can be no other maxim. If we allow ourselves to believe that we can kill those people who commit certain crimes, then we will also allow ourselves to kill in other ways - in wars, for example.

The Brunswickan does, however, agree that society does need to be protected. As we have said, human life is sacred, whether that

life belongs to a pillar of society or an habitual criminal.

Several members of the House have suggested, instead, a penalty for those who commit murder. It is a penalty which, in the face of a prison system that fails to rehabilitate criminals, is the best yet proposed.

Instead of killing those guilty of murder, goes the proposal, give them a life sentence and the minimum of 25 years. Only after this 25 year wait would the of-

fender be eligible for parole; even then it is possible that he might be turned down.

Frankly, we would be much more willing to back this proposal than any other. It does have its drawbacks: the goal of our rehabilitation system is, after all, to get offenders back to leading normal lives - why then imprison them for at least 25 years?

It's a good question, but as

yet our prison system has not been sufficiently successful in rehabilitating the offender to warrant parole too soon.

We would all agree that some punishment is necessary. We propose that the punishment take the form of a minimum 25 year sentence instead of death by hanging.

It is our hope that Parliament will see it the same way.



"ARE YOU REALLY A POWER-HUNGRY OBSTRUCTIONIST, DADDY?"

### THE BRUNSWICKAN

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Edison Stewart

MANAGING EDITOR Chris J. Allen

AD DESIGN & LAYOUT Sue Woods

ADVERTISING MANAGER Bob Lank

EDITORS news Susan Manzer  
sports David Anderson  
photo Ken De Freitas  
features Jeff Davies  
literary Padi McDonough

SECRETARY Jo-Anne Drummond

photo Bob Boyes  
Gary Constantine  
Danielle Thibeault  
Al Denton  
Bob McLeod  
James Walker

CIRCULATION MANAGER Jayne Bird

#### Staff This Week

Bob Johnson  
Forrest Orser  
Gary Cameron  
Myrna Ruest  
Elizabeth Evens  
George McAllister  
Dave Campbell  
Maurice Gauthier  
Roland Morrison  
Denise LeBlond  
Stan Twist  
Susan Miller  
Peter Neily  
Mary Blackstone  
Milton Thomas

Kathy Westman  
Rick Fisher  
John Ball  
Janet Hogg  
Nancy Carr  
Terry Downing  
Mike Fairweather  
Dave McMillan  
Richard Kent  
Sheryl Wright  
Ken Corbett  
Tom Benjamin  
Jan Moodie  
Bob Marshall  
Barry Bisson

One hundred and seventh year of publication. Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication. A member of Canadian University Press. The Brunswickan, "New Brunswick's largest weekly newspaper", is published weekly at the Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick. Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the Student Representative Council or the Administration of the University. The Brunswickan office is located in the Student Union Building, College Hill, Fredericton, N. B. Printed at L'imprimerie Acadienne Ltée., Moncton, N. B. Subscriptions, \$3 per year. Postage paid in cash at the Third Class Rate, Permit No. 7. National advertising rates available through Youthstream, 307 Davenport Road, Toronto. Local ad rates available at 475-5191.