

the thing to do would be to sentence murderers of police guards and wardens once again, to life imprisonment. This seems to me to be the logical conclusion.

I am also concerned that the public is not receiving an adequate report of this debate. The hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) holds views, many of which I oppose very strongly. My attitude on many public questions is diametrically opposed to his. However, the other day he placed on the record some very disturbing statistics. I have been scanning the newspapers of this country and have found that very few Canadians who depend on the newspapers for their information will realize what in fact and in practice the expression "life imprisonment" has meant, and this is extremely important.

The matter of the state taking the life of an innocent man is what troubles the retentionists most, and is their tenderest point. This is something which would cause any thoughtful person the greatest pangs of conscience. We know that it has happened and it is something which brings sorrow to the heart of any decent person. But we also know, as Lord Justice Darling once said, that while perhaps an innocent man may hang, many guilty ones escape. I would say to those on the other side of the argument that an equally disturbing crisis in conscience faces them, and it is this: What happens to society after the individual who has killed one or more of his fellows is released into society and again takes the life of one or more of those to whom the state should give protection.

Who has a conscience problem then? I would not call anyone who allowed this to happen a mental barbarian. I would extend to him my greatest sympathy because he would bear a terrible burden. If in this debate we entertain for a moment the idea that life imprisonment in fact means life imprisonment, we deal with a delusion which could indeed be extremely dangerous. It is extremely dangerous in this country because we know that the facilities within our institutions for any sort of mental health reform are shockingly and pitifully inadequate. So the placing of a person in one of our institutions is not a sure-fire recipe for the reorientation of that man's attitude toward society. This is a very serious problem. When the Solicitor General will move to act in that field he will have the support of all of us because it is tremendously important.

The agonizing part of the problem is the protection of our society. We live in a per-

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missive age. Sometimes I have the feeling that the motto for our time might be: Nothing is anybody's fault. Sometimes it is the Oedipus complex that is blamed, or the fact that one is a fourth child and the other three were preferred, or else that at Sunday school one had an incompetent teacher. Of course we know there are all sorts of environmental factors, but have we yet reached the stage of viewing man as having no individual responsibility? Do we not consider that when a man takes arms against society he is never responsible for it? This is the question we must ask ourselves, and we must look inward for the answer. I think it is degrading to suggest that the human species is nothing more than something which responds to external stimuli. Psychologists say that man in all his actions and reactions is just a little higher than the ape. One can produce predictable patterns of behaviour. But some of us believe also that man is a little lower than the angels and that he wants to be given responsibility. This is not to say that when we force men to uphold the law we should accept the terribly condescending label of mental barbarians. But surely sometimes we must ask the individual to accept responsibility for his action.

I am concerned that this bill may be passed in a feeling of euphoria because it is contemporary. I have never thought that being contemporary is one of the cardinal virtues, that it is the thing to do and that you are on the side of the angels when you are progressive. I have read editorials which say that men with conscience have to vote for abolition. It is said that thoughtful people are abolitionists, and that it is only the poor, insensitive, hardhearted people and the barbaric die-hards who, when they search their conscience, come up with an answer different from that of the Solicitor General.

This is the element that is creeping into this debate, and I do not like it. I place people like the former minister of justice on a par with any member of this house in so far as sensitivity to human problems is concerned. There is no room for this kind of condemnation. We are looking for an answer, and I must confess, in all humility, that I am not yet sure of my own answer.

• (4:10 p.m.)

I do not like the bill. I am afraid it does not take into consideration the protection of society, which is surely a fundamental of law. However I hate to be so narrow minded that I would not say that, perhaps for five