

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

clear case. I believe, with the small experience I have had in dealing with criminals, that the reason statistics lie is that we have probably been attacking this problem from the wrong direction. We work backward from the murder and try to figure out whether or not the fear of the rope might have prevented the crime and whether some change in the punishment would continue to deter if, in fact, it has any deterrent value at all.

I do not believe that capital punishment has any deterrent value whatsoever. I believe that the criminal mind is so designed, as are the minds of most people in the human race, that there is in it a feeling of self-preservation, a feeling of indestructibility. Nature has implanted this instinct so deeply in us that it is very difficult for a sane man to imagine himself as a corpse, whether it be on the end of a rope or anywhere else. The hope that springs eternal in the human breast is to preserve one's life, and this gives human beings a completely blind spot in that they disregard the fact that one may have to pay the supreme penalty for one's crime.

If a person has talked to a condemned man I am sure he has discovered that even up to the time the condemned man hears the rasping of the bolt underneath his feet and takes the final plunge into eternity he never loses hope that by some miracle, physical or spiritual, he will be saved from this terrible end. I believe this feeling is universal in the normal man and is much deeper in the twisted minds of those who have committed a cold-blooded and deliberate crime.

The greed which makes people steal, the stealing which is the crime and the narcissus complex which lies behind the crime makes such a person entirely blind to the natural consequences of his act. However, let us not despair, because I believe there is one way of getting to the criminal mind. I have seen this dramatically proven in my short career in the police. The greatest deterrent to crime of all kinds, from a mere breaking of the traffic laws to robbery and murder, is the degree to which you can convince the criminal that he will be apprehended.

The reputation of the mounted police in this country is probably our greatest single deterrent to crime. It is not the penalty that criminals will pay if they are caught which deters them from crime. It is not the whip, the jail sentence, the taking away of their freedom, nor even the rope itself, that deters them. It is the fact that at some moment

sooner or later after the crime has been committed they have the conviction that the strong arm of the law will grab them. This is the most terrible moment of a criminal's existence and the time when he feels that crime does not pay. When he has been in jail for any length of time nature takes over and he rationalizes his crime. He may stay in jail anywhere from a few days to 20 years, but I doubt that his attitude toward society is affected one way or the other. I doubt that the sentence in any way helps to cure him. In my opinion, the fear that he will be caught is the surest deterrent to any crime small or great.

● (3:00 p.m.)

I suggest that because we have heard most of the arguments about abolition and retention in their pure form, we have lost sight of the fact that the most important thing which the law enforcement officers in this country can do, from the Solicitor General down to the last recruit in our great police forces, is to develop the skill, integrity, courage and devotion which will bring every lawbreaker in this country to summary justice.

I have heard those in favour of the retention of capital punishment argue that it is cheaper because we do not have to maintain the criminal. I believe we could take an entirely different view on that subject and say we are not spending nearly enough money in this country on the prevention of crime in the first place and, second, in improving the educational methods in respect of our young people. I should like to remind hon. members of the time about 20 years ago when we had a youth and police program which entitled every member of the police force to use the equipment of the force. Police cars were used to transport Boy Scouts to their meetings and thus our young people were encouraged to take the positive steps which help them to build character and resist the temptation to break seriously the law of the country. A very small amount of money was used for the program and yet it has largely been dropped. I do not know what the reason was, but the positive results of that work were dramatic.

I have done a great deal of research on this subject and I could mention which local communities were affected the most by this program. I will mention one area in particular, the city of Hamilton where about 20 years ago a certain police inspector started a program of backyard baseball. By a strange coincidence, after this program had been

[Mr. Bigg.]