

than highly paid ombudsmen social workers whose main preoccupation in this House is to entreat ministers of the Crown for some favourable titbit such as a pension for Mrs. Jones.

My objections to the death penalty are as follows, and I will summarize them: first, there is no statistical evidence, that I have been able to uncover, that capital punishment is a deterrent. Murder, as I have said before, is most often a crime of passion and premeditated murder is extremely rare. Second, juries being human and composed of humans can make mistakes and innocent men can die. Third, even in the various American states which have retained the death penalty most murders are never solved, or murder suspects are acquitted by juries who choose to err on the side of mercy rather than on the side of doubtful testimony coming before them. Fourth, legalized murder—that is, capital punishment—in my view and in the view of many members of this House brutalizes society. Finally, I could not execute a human myself; therefore I feel that I am in no position to ask someone else to do what I, as an individual, could not bring myself to do.

● (2030)

I have looked into some of the authorities on the subject. Karl F. Schuessler in his book *The Deterrent Influence of the Death Penalty* wrote this:

—previous studies have uniformly concluded that the death penalty is inconsequential as a deterrent, that the relative frequency of murder in a given population is a function of the conditions under which the group lives.

This is a very important statement, because if we change the conditions under which we as a group live then we are certainly going to have a profound effect on the incidence of murder, and I cannot accept the fact that if the state goes into the business of murder an improvement in the homicide rate in our society can be brought about. What Mr. Schuessler says about groups I think might also apply to sub-groups. He concludes that “different population classifications have different homicide and execution rates,” meaning of course that the difference affects different people differently.

I think it is well-known that the law tends to discriminate against low socio-economic males in its application. This discrimination also holds true in terms of convictions in homicide cases. Nothing that I have read about this subject, therefore, has persuaded me that I should abandon my position that state murder or, if you like, execution, brutalizes society and that it has little or no influence on public security. We must, then, ask ourselves: Why is there in existence now this powerful, public sentiment apparently in favour of returning to the noose?

I do not know of any parliamentarian who has not gone through agony of doubt about capital punishment and the bill before us. We have been bombarded by the pro- and anti-noose forces. Incidentally, both sides have used the Bible liberally to reinforce their positions. The candidates of the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, and of my own party in my riding during the last election all came out as abolitionists. I am pleased that we are in the company of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), a former prime min-

ister, and the leader of my own party as being philosophically opposed to capital punishment.

We will all vote for the present bill, but when it gets to committee we will be asked to consider certain amendments to retain the death penalty in limited circumstances and also amendments which would broaden its use in the light of current public opinion. I, of course, cannot be hypothetical about what might happen in the committee, but certainly a number of amendments will be put forward and undoubtedly some of them will be accepted. Perhaps the matter of hijacking and the protection of families of policemen and prison guards might be considered favourably.

I would like my constituents, and people all across Canada, to know that Members of Parliament on both sides of this moral question have tried desperately to analyse the rationale behind current public sentiment in favour of returning to the noose. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, I insist that no public-be-damned attitude exists on the part of elected representatives in this chamber.

I think that the urge to reinstate capital punishment has become, not a citizen regression into a state of barbarism but a symbol of the general malaise in society, which was touched on by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), a symbol expressed by people who feel that something is definitely wrong and either their elected representatives are unable or perhaps unwilling to do anything about it. I do not think we are either unwilling or unable to come to grips with problems, but I am suggesting that that is what the public thinks.

There exists a profound public concern about the increasing number of crimes of violence. There is a suspicion that even when dangerous men are caught and convicted, irresponsible parole and prison policies release these men to prey again on the public after they have served a minimal portion of their sentences. That may or may not be true, but nevertheless I am certain that the feeling exists, and not without some foundation.

Citizens also consider it irresponsible of prison officials to allow convicted, dangerous sexual offenders unescorted weekend freedom, which in one instance led to the tragic murder of the daughter of a prison guard. The public is also fed up with policies which appear to direct more sympathy to the rehabilitation of the criminal than to the protection of the innocent. We as Members of Parliament have to face it; we cannot avoid it.

I am also convinced that much of the pro-noose sentiment arises from a nostalgic yearning for simpler times when things did not change so fast. The new morality to many people means no morality at all. The increasing incidence of drugs, long hair, funny clothes and the decline of religion and the work ethic all combine to pulverize traditional values and priorities and to insulate one generation from its predecessor.

I believe that Canadians and North Americans generally are frustrated. They are bombarded with propaganda, afraid, herded into cities where they are rootless and isolated. People have been forced to cope with more change in the last 40 years than civilization had to cope with in the previous 4,000 years. Popularizing this view-