

*Capital Punishment*

evidence that we in parliament could weigh when we are debating measures to protect Canadian citizens from murderers and other violent criminals? We would have some evidence to evaluate if the Minister of Justice had had the courage and the sense of responsibility to allow the sentences of our courts to be carried out. I suggest he has no right to tell the Canadian people there is no evidence to support the position of the retentionists in this House.

For a long time it has been common knowledge that retentionists outnumber the abolitionists throughout the country and, indeed, in this House. The minister knows that if his views prevail and capital punishment is abolished it will be because of the majority which the government commands in this Chamber and the political compulsion imposed on members of the cabinet to vote in favour of the bill before us.

The minister tries to make a case in favour of abolition on the ground that executions carried out by the state amount to murder and that the state does not have the right to commit murder in order to punish the crime of murder. What complete and utter nonsense. A state can commit murder, but not in the way suggested by the Minister of Justice. The Prime Minister's buddy, Fidel Castro, has committed thousands of cold-blooded murders in the name of the state. That great friend of our Prime Minister has condemned thousands of people in his kangaroo courts and then had them murdered in the course of disgusting public executions.

I do not agree with the minister that we will be committing murder if we allow the sentences passed by Canadian courts to be carried out. I would point out that when a person is charged with capital murder and appears in our courts, he or she has recourse to laws of procedure, laws of evidence, and the benefit of adequate legal counsel. The accused has the advantage of being considered innocent until the prosecution can establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Should guilt be established, the accused has the benefit of an avenue of appeal extending through lower court all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. Anyone who compares this process to the sham and shame of a so-called Cuban or Russian court trial should have his head looked at.

What we are talking about here is the right of the state to adopt stern measures to protect the majority of law-abiding people in our country from an anti-social minority. What we are talking about is whether or not the government opposite will accept its responsibility to the electorate and use all of the weapons available to us so as to win the war against violence and capital crime. The criminals are using all the weapons they have. Can we do any less?

The Canadian government, like all other governments, maintains the armed forces in readiness to defend our people from aggressors. Our soldiers, sailors, and airmen might be called upon as they have been in the past to kill in the defence of our country and our free society. Some of those who spend all their time pleading the cause of murderers and other violent criminals say war is state-subsidized murder. This is a high-sounding phrase and one which gives these people an excuse to "cop out" when they are called upon to defend the society which has defended them. No, Mr. Speaker.

While crimes might be committed by individuals in certain wartime situations, under cover of war, as it were, the act of going to war in defence of Queen and country is not in itself a crime. Let the abolitionists dredge up some more credible excuse for the cop out they propose. Let them match their philosophies and their theories against the reality of everyday crime in Canada and tell us that capital punishment is more brutal than the crimes which it is intended to deter. I insist, Mr. Speaker, that a state which maintains a judiciary such as we have in Canada, a state which allows as many opportunities of appeal against court sentences as ours does, cannot commit murder. We can permit murder, we can forgive murder, and we can punish murder. But we cannot commit murder.

I am just as interested in the rehabilitation of anti-social persons and misfits as anyone else, but I think it behoves members of parliament to approach the subject of rehabilitation with somewhat more realism than I have seen exhibited by many so-called experts on human behaviour. In my view, a lot of them have their priorities mixed up. The criminologists and the sociologists are not the only ones who are mixed up, though.

The new Liberals, the disciples of Trudeaucracy, are also mixed up. At the moment they are chasing each other around the Liberal squirrel cage wondering who is leading and where they are going. These new Liberals are those who advocate abolition and who insist, at the same time, that the answer is rehabilitation. At the present time they are confused by the antics of the Minister of Justice who is trying to satisfy retentionists by promising longer prison sentences as the answer to the abolition of the death penalty. He promised to keep convicted murderers behind bars for 25 years. At first the new Liberals accepted this logic, happy that at long last they would see the death penalty abolished. But then the new Liberals—and they are not all from the Liberal party—realized they would not be able to rehabilitate these poor, misunderstood, and maligned capital murderers if those offenders were required to spend 25 years behind bars. They realized that a person 25 years of age would be 50 years old when released from prison. That person's productive life would have been spent in confinement. A person convicted of premeditated murder at age 40, and sentenced to 25 years, would be 65 years old when released, ready for old age security.

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This debate is taking place under indeed trying times for parliament and especially for the Liberal government which is now holding the reins of power. They stagger along from day to day in disarray and chaos. It has got so bad that the Prime Minister is now unable to confront the confusion, corruption, influence peddling, graft, and hypocrisy of his own administration and the Liberal party. The latest example is the ineptitude and bungling of the Lockheed Orion deal today and the resultant loss of thirty-four millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. That surely is capital punishment, of a different sort!

This administration will go down in history as one in which the credibility of government, of parliament, and of the individual members thereof, reached its lowest point. The latest polls show the Prime Minister at a new low of unpopularity. Do not be fooled, Mr. Speaker, into thinking