

*Capital Punishment*

elected with the wave, with the swing of the pendulum, a great many of them will leave the moment the pendulum swings the other way—it is because they felt they had leadership, they could stand up and say: You are asking for such or such thing. Let us take the case of the death penalty. I think it is the duty of each Hon. Member to tell his or her constituents: You are right to seek more severe penalties. But the more severe penalties you are seeking does not mean necessarily to go and take someone's life. And then to ask them how we are going to kill murderers I feel is going a little bit too far. Assuming most Hon. Members are in favour of reinstating capital punishment, will they accept tomorrow to become executioners? It is easy to delegate powers to others, to appoint them and say: You are going to use hanging to kill this man. It is easy to say. But when we get on an individual basis, because of my experience as a social worker in my area, working to stop juvenile delinquency . . . You know, the people who get involved with organized crime know that sooner or later they will end up in a coffin. It is as easy as this, and they know it is one of the gang who is going to do them in; this is not reason enough to stop them from getting involved with organized crime. Remember in Chicago, Al Capone, they did not stop him because of the death penalty, but they managed to destroy his empire by convicting him of income tax evasion. What I believe, and I invite the Prime Minister, before we proceed to vote—since this debate, in my mind, is pointless and people who think that it will solve the violence we have witnessed lately in convenience stores are mistaken. The death penalty will not solve that problem, it will change nothing. For those who think that this debate will solve the problem of assault and robbery on our senior citizens, I say that the death penalty is no solution. And this debate will not resolve the issue. For those who expect solutions to theft, to violence, to crime and delinquency among our youth or to drug abuse—this debate will bring no solution.

I would have liked to see the Prime Minister, in his speech, go beyond saying that he was against capital punishment and say why he was against it. I would have preferred to see the Prime Minister commit his Government—in this debate, which he allowed for political reasons, so to speak, because he was railroaded into it by two or three Members from his party and because this is what made him win the party leadership, as one NDP member has observed. But we must admit that whatever the reason for the debate, he could have committed himself and given the reasons and that he will be the one to blame if the debate on abolition of capital punishment is lost this evening. The reason is that the Prime Minister could have won over five or six Members from his party who now intend to cast their vote in favour of reestablishing capital punishment. Those MPs would have voted against the motion with assurance that, as soon as the session will resume in September, their party, their Prime Minister, their Government would put forward bills to improve the parole system, and a program or bill to stop juvenile delinquency or to improve our prison system, and programs to rehabilitate people convicted for a first occurrence of shoplifting or a first hold-up. That kind of guarantee would have given the Conservative Members

confidence that the criminal justice system would be corrected. But unfortunately the Prime Minister just said, as any other parliamentarian, that he was against capital punishment. But the difference with him is that he has power. He is the Prime Minister. As for the Conservative Member who spoke before me, I just feel that he might have changed his position if he had been given the guarantee that the justice system would be corrected, that people convicted for heinous crime and sentenced for 25 years would stay in prison for 25 years. I feel that that kind of statement would have satisfied that MP and that he would have changed his vote. But that was not to be, unfortunately. I think the Prime Minister still has an opportunity to do that before the vote in order that at 1 o'clock tonight the majority of members reject the reinstatement of capital punishment.

I would like the Members to ask themselves why there is so much violence. For what reason are there so many robberies? We have to start at the root. Why is it that young people, in spite of all they read in the papers and see around them, will still go the wrong way? The reason is a lack of incentive, a lack of community organizations in most of our ridings all across the country, to help young people in trouble. I believe the Government to be somewhat responsible because programs like Katimavik were probably not the breeding ground for prime ministers but some of those young people would get an education that way, they learned how to work in teams and acquired a sense of responsibility, of respect toward their fellow human beings, a sense of sharing. However, unfortunately, the Government has failed to accomplish something for our youth and for future generations; it has done nothing to stop juvenile delinquency. What has the Government done to prevent and eliminate drug trafficking which is a primary source of violence, robberies, hold-ups, and murders? Drug trafficking is one of the major causes of what is happening in Canada. It is much more difficult to control this form of organized crime than to simply hang the poor who get caught and allow the big shots responsible for all this trafficking to key their network in operation and to cash in on it.

Why has the Government failed to bring in real measures? Instead of this debate launched in January or February in the House, where about half the Members had an opportunity to make their views heard, why has the government not develop a strategy to improve, as I was saying a while ago, our national parole system? Why are we not tougher with those who deserve it and more tolerant with those who deserve our tolerance? Also why not introduce mechanisms with appropriate financing to help those who for various reasons go astray once? It happens once, they get caught shoplifting, or being an accomplice is a hold-up and often one wonders why?

It is the lack of money, and these people are often sent to jail with other people having a lot more experience, and nothing prepares these young people to return to society when they have served their sentence, or sometimes the only persons who await them when they are out of jail are people who, under the pretext of helping them, will perhaps bring them back in a