

*Capital Punishment*

The death penalty certainly has not protected policemen. The year when the greatest number of policemen were killed on duty in Canada was 1962 when 11 policemen were killed on the job. In that year, there were two hangings in Canada, one for killing a policeman.

Since 1962, there has been an average of four policemen killed on duty per year while there is now a much greater number of policemen than there were in 1962 and a larger population. Of course, four per year is four too many, but the point is that when the death penalty was in force in 1962, it did not protect those 11 policemen who were killed while on duty. Nor does the death penalty protect the public generally. In 1976, the year we totally abolished capital punishment in Canada, there were 668 murders, a rate of 2.9 per 100,000 population. Ten years later, in 1986, we had 561 murders, a rate of 2.2 per 100,000. That is the lowest rate in 15 years.

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Let us compare that with those states in the U.S. which have brought back capital punishment. So it is absolutely clear I must point out, that in the U.S., unlike Canada, capital punishment and criminal law is not a national matter. It is under the jurisdiction of the individual states. Every state has its own criminal law and every state decides whether or not it will have capital punishment and how it will be carried out. The U.S. Supreme Court decided in 1976 that the states could reintroduce capital punishment and some states did. In 1985 the rate of murder in the U.S. as a whole was 7.9 per 100,000 population. That compares with 2.2 in Canada.

There are two states which have reintroduced capital punishment and have the most executions, Texas with 18 and Florida with 16. The rate of murder in Texas in 1985 was 14 per 100,000, and in Florida 11.6. Not only is the rate of murder in those two states with capital punishment higher than in Canada, it is higher than the U.S. average. The death penalty is not protecting the citizens of Florida and Texas.

In the debate in this House on this issue in 1976 many Hon. Members rose in their place and said that if we removed the death penalty people will feel free to kill. Murderers will run amok in the streets. That did not happen. As a matter of fact, the rate declined, as I pointed out. I have here a clipping from the *Montreal Gazette* dated February 14, 1987. The headline reads: "Shot Montreal man in cold blood, Miami killer laughs at crime". This is a story about a Montreal businessman who flew to Florida, rented a car at the airport and drove away looking for the interstate highway. He did not know where it was so he stopped his car on the side of the street and asked a citizen where the interstate highway was. This citizen, as I call him, pulled out a gun and shot him in the head because he wanted the car. They caught that man later the same day and he was quoted in this article as saying:

"I just shot him," shrugged the man who confessed yesterday to murdering a Montreal millionaire who asked him the way to Interstate 85, and then he laughed.

The fact Florida has the death penalty and has had 16 executions did not protect this Montreal businessman in that state.

When we compare rates of murder in those states with the death penalty and those states without the death penalty there is a clear pattern of lower murder rates in the non-death penalty states. In recent months the United Kingdom voted against the reinstatement of the death penalty. That is the third time the British Parliament has turned down an attempt to bring back the death penalty in that country. There the rate of murder is 1.1 per 100,000, much less than in Canada. In Belgium it is 1.3. In New Zealand it is 1.6. In France it is 3.3. All are much lower than the U.S. where 12 states have brought back executions and carried out executions since the U.S. Supreme Court permitted them to do so.

I have had several occasions to debate this issue with the Hon. Member for Peterborough. He has said that the U.S. reinstated capital punishment and the murder rate came down. Before 1976 he says the rate was over 10 per 100,000 and it has come down to 7.9. It is still very high but it has come down. Let us make absolutely clear that the U.S. did not reinstate capital punishment. In the U.S. it is a state matter. Thirty-seven states voted to bring back capital punishment, but executions have been carried out in only 12 of those states. There have been 66 executions in the U.S. since 1976 and more than half took place in Florida and Texas. Capital punishment is not protecting people in those states where it exists. Capital punishment does not protect, and that is our first argument against it.

Second, it is against most of our moral codes. The commandment is, thou shalt not kill. Before World War II and back into the last century capital punishment was justified as a self-defence mechanism. There was the exception to the commandment that in self-defence you could protect yourself and your loved ones. If someone came in to kill you or your loved ones, as a last resort you could kill him and that was justifiable. The justification was self-defence. It was thought that capital punishment was a legitimate self-defence mechanism. However, as statistics-gathering bureaus in many countries in the western world became more sophisticated it was soon learned that the death penalty was not acting as a self-defence mechanism. If it did not do that, it had no moral justification.

That is why we have seen in this debate that every mainline church in Canada has come out against the death penalty. The Catholic Bishops, the Anglican Bishops, the United Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church, the Salvation Army and synagogues have come out against it. It is true that some of the evangelical churches have come out in favour, but the great majority of our principal Christian churches have been opposed.

I have already said that in the so-called western world the death penalty does not exist in one entire country. It is still on