

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REINSTATEMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski:

That this House supports, in principle, the reinstatement of capital punishment and directs that a special committee on reinstatement, composed of 15 members, be established, hold hearings and make its final report to the House no later than three (3) months following the adoption of this motion, such report to provide recommendations on:

- (a) which offence or offences should carry the death penalty, and in what circumstances;
- (b) which method or methods should be used to carry out the penalty of death, and in what circumstances;

That, pursuant to Standing Order 107(1), this special committee be hereby appointed as a committee to prepare and bring in a bill no later than three months following the adoption of this motion, founded on the committee's recommendations on (a) and (b) above; such a bill shall be the object of a separate and distinct report of the special committee, and such a report shall be its final report;

That such bill, when reported from such special committee to the House, be deemed pursuant to Standing Order 107(1) to have been introduced and stand on the Order Paper, in the name of the special committee chairman, for first reading at the next sitting of the House; and that subsequent House stages of the bill be considered under "Government Orders", with the bill standing under the heading "Government Business"; and that, when the said bill has been read a second time, it shall stand referred to a Legislative Committee;

That the Striking Committee be empowered to name the Members of the special committee, provided that once the Striking Committee report is laid upon the Table, it shall be deemed concurred in;

That the special committee have the power to sit while the House is sitting and during periods when the House stands adjourned;

That the special committee be empowered to report from time to time and send for persons and papers, and to print such papers and evidence from time to time as may be ordered by the committee and to retain the services of expert, technical, professional and clerical staff;

That the special committee be empowered to adjourn from place to place inside Canada and that, when deemed necessary, the appropriate staff accompany the committee;

That a quorum of the special committee be eight (8) members for any vote, resolution or other decision; and that the chairman be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and authorize the printing thereof whenever six (6) members are present;

That any substitution of membership on the special committee be made pursuant to Standing Order 94(4); and

That, notwithstanding the usual practices of this House, if the House is not sitting when the special committee is ready to issue its final report and the said bill, the special committee shall present its report and the bill to the House by filing them with the Clerk of the House provided that the report shall then be deemed to have been laid upon the Table, and the bill shall then be deemed, pursuant to Standing Order 107(1), to have been introduced at the first sitting of the House thereafter and to stand on the Order Paper in the name of the special committee chairman, for first reading at the next sitting of the House; and that subsequent House stages of the bill be considered under "Government Orders", with the bill standing under the heading "Government Business".

And on the amendment of Mr. Nystrom (p. 7307)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): At two o'clock two minutes were left in the time allowed for the speech of the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry). The Hon. Member.

Capital Punishment

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, the death penalty makes it harder to convict murderers. Capital punishment will make the streets more dangerous because juries are reluctant to convict if death is the penalty. A Department of the Solicitor General Saskatchewan Government study showed that from 1960 to 1974, when capital punishment was still on the books, the over-all rate of conviction was 10 per cent. From 1976 to 1982 that rate rose to 20 per cent.

Carrying out the death penalty will cost the taxpayers more than keeping a murderer in prison because when capital punishment is enforced the legal appeal process is exhausted to the limit, all the costs are borne by the taxpayer and the costs of social disruption is borne by all of us.

Some people feel that the death penalty is needed to protect police and prison guards, but more police were killed on duty in Canada when capital punishment existed. It is important to note that other occupations are at a far greater risk of death, including construction, fishing, forestry—at 50 times the risk—and mining. Instead of adopting the death penalty we should have adopted as a collective and personal responsibility of all individuals and society as a whole, the safety of all workers, including police and prison guards.

Countries with the death penalty have the worst human rights violations. Iran, Iraq, Chile, China, South Africa and the Soviet Union all resort to capital punishment. The rate in the United States, the only western country with the death penalty, is eight times that of England, six times that of New Zealand and triple that of Canada. In capital punishment countries other violence, a cycle of violence, is the order of the day. We find the profound barbarism, enforced abortions, public executions, the horrors of the Gulag, executions for holding the Baha'i faith, torture, imprisonment of children, death squads, amputations of limbs for theft offences, Saturday night specials, lynch mobs and the Ku Klux Klan. By executing murderers we do not say that "life is not cheap here", we identify Canada with the countries where life truly is cheap.

The campaign for the death penalty, Madam Speaker, ignores the real problems. It ignores the inequities, the inconsistencies and the loopholes in the criminal justice, the parole and penal systems. The death penalty ignores serious action against violent crime, the roots of which can be found in the vicious cycles of poverty and alienation. As a society, we must devote far more of our resources to education, treatment and direct attack on the cause rather than the results. We must improve treatment facilities, emphasize and promote faith as the basis for life, support crime prevention weeks and crime prevention measures, interpret and use the studies of criminogenesis which we have. We must campaign against crime not only as a problem but as a symptom.