

*Criminal Code*

the condemned pays for others or suffers as a warning to others; therefore, his execution is not morally justified.

The death penalty is not the deterrent it is credited to be and statistics prove that its abolition will not result in an increase in crime. Therefore, capital punishment loses its basic traditional justification.

Capital punishment is a form of cruelty and inhumanity unworthy of a civilization purporting to be humanitarian. Physicians state that even the most efficient methods cannot bring about instant and painless death.

The major drawback to capital punishment is that it is past recall. Notwithstanding all official statements, a miscarriage of justice always remains possible. There have been some and this is why capital punishment is society's unforgiveable crime.

Society can protect itself by means other than capital punishment which is just an easy way out. It saves looking for efficient methods of fighting crime and for a rational prevention plan.

Capital punishment is unjust because it strikes not only the criminal but his relatives, and his whole family is branded with shame.

To claim that capital punishment is the only way to full repentance is a paradox. One thing sure, with it, rehabilitation of the human being involved becomes impossible.

Due to its absolute nature, capital punishment cannot be measured to the degree of guilt and the grievousness of the crime and all the differences that were sought between capital murder and other kinds of homicide have been shown to be arbitrary.

It is a contradiction to claim that capital punishment is a deterrent while it is being meted out in secret.

Curiosity aroused by an execution is morbid, it is a well-known fact, and more and more it is being realized that capital punishment in itself may lead to crime, especially in the case of mental defectives who, in spite of all legal and judicial precautions, are often executed.

From a racial and social point of view, the death penalty is not applied on an equal footing. Some people cannot afford legal counsel, others are morally incapable of securing such counsel. This punishment which should be the expression of justice for all often ends up, in practice, an injustice for the individual.

[Mr. Neveu.]

Mr. Speaker, if we sincerely want a better society that we can be proud of and when we cast our vote, on this most important question, we should do so according to our own conscience.

If prisoner rehabilitation is to truly be achieved I think prisoners should be classified so as to make a distinction between categories of criminals.

Another equally important step would be to improve our security systems so as to protect the people in general and the guards in particular.

Christians should be guided by the scriptural message in their daily and earthly tasks. I say this because, at the beginning of each sitting of the house we, as members of parliament, representatives of the people and legislators, always ask to be guided by our faith in God and his divine providence. And we ask him now to enlighten us in this regard.

The Holy Scriptures are clear in this matter. Moses' law prescribed that "Thou shall not kill", and Christ, without changing this law, came to abolish the law of retaliation known as "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".

The originality of Christianity was in advocating absolute love. A Christian must not only love, but forgive his enemies. Like Peter, therefore, justice must be told "Put up thy sword into the sheath."

I can hear you say: Will society then allow everything? Not at all, to forgive has never meant to abandon everything. It means to forget the wrong, not the offender who should be taken care of, helped and put back on the right path.

But there is the terrible danger of recurrence. I know, Mr. Speaker, that statistics plainly show that no one who was hanged ever relapsed into crime. Others, unfortunately... have done so. This means that a pardon cannot be granted without useful and necessary precautions. What we need is adequate maximum security penitentiaries. It is not the Dion trial that should be reopened, but that of the jails and the guards, of those who set him free or let him escape.

Besides it is becoming increasingly evident that our judiciary feels guilty in inflicting capital punishment.

Why not replace insecurity and guilt by feelings born of pride and greatness?

It has become very important to establish definitely in the sight of everybody a truly better society, a humane society that knows