

*Capital Punishment*

As for the concern of the Prime Minister over a society that adopts vengeance as an acceptable motive for its collective behaviour, is it vengeance any more than any other punishment, or is it strong and equal justice for the most horrible crime possible, that of taking—without right or law—the life of another human being? And what about the collective behaviour for which the state must be held responsible, that of allowing execution by the underworld to continue unabated without any threat to their own style of justice, by police who know that the state is no longer willing to protect them, by inmates in prison, by guards and by citizens who believe that the state's machinery has faltered and broken down? What about that collective behaviour?

The abolitionists constantly ask the question: What civilized country still uses capital punishment? I ask them, what civilized country does what Bill C-84 will do—lock men up for 25 years without hope other than escape through hostage-taking? As reported at page 14500 of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister had this to say:

—it is inevitable that the defeat of this would eventually place the hangman's noose around some person's neck.

If I am willing to take on my conscience the execution of police killers and those who commit deliberate murders, I am quite satisfied, if I vote as all of you vote, that I am taking the responsibility for my vote.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Holt:** But the abolitionists must also take responsibility, especially those who voted in 1968 and 1972, for saving the lives of sadists. Take the example of three ruthless killers who seized hostages in the B.C. penitentiary incident that ended in the death of Mary Steinhäuser and the mental breakdown of at least two prison workers. Because of those votes, these three lived to kill another day. They are Andrew Bruce, a paid contract killer, Dwight Lucas, who planned and carried out an axe murder on the prairies and was the one who for 41 hours held a knife tip in the eye and at the throat of John Ryan, who is now mentally ill, and junkie killer Clair Wilson who, after his conviction, stabbed a sheriff who was guarding him. I think that the abolitionists must accept responsibility for the conduct of these three people.

If the abolitionists win this week in this major vote, the public, which no doubt will feel that their wishes have been treated with contempt, will have their say in the next major vote. Let us hope that the sanction to kill that will be given by this House will not allow the hoodlums to move beyond control before the mistake that the majority vote of this House could be making this week is corrected. I urge hon. members at least to study the points that many of us have made in support of the retention of capital punishment in Canada.

**Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak following the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt), whose speech was one of the better ones that we have heard in this debate. I have been in touch with this debate right from the beginning of second reading and all through committee stage, and have spoken a little over three hours in total, so I am not going to take long on this third reading

[Mrs. Holt.]

stage. Most of the cases that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway brought up are good examples of why I am a retentionist, though I was an abolitionist at one time. Having heard some of the cases that the hon. member referred to, I think a lot of people will, or should, show consideration for change.

One of the points that I want to bring up in this final stage of debate concerns the method of capital punishment that is used today. I think this is one of the reasons some people in this country are still opposed to capital punishment. All through this debate, every time the CBC, CTV or any newspaper carried a major story on capital punishment they showed a rope and noose and talked about how cruel was that aspect of capital punishment.

I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that some day there will be a return to capital punishment in this country, but I hope that the next time we have to debate this subject we will decide on a more humane form of capital punishment before the debate begins which would remove the situation where everyone who is a retentionist is called a hanger. Other methods of capital punishment can be used, and personally I think the gas chamber is a much better form. Had that method been in effect in Canada, I do not think some of the comments that have been made would have been made. I think the way the press reported the method of capital punishment that is used was irresponsible.

I should like to quote a couple of articles that were sent to me. During this debate all members of parliament have received a lot of mail, and I am no exception; but I have a couple of items that I think are very appropriate. One of them was sent to me by a constituent in my own riding of Burnaby-Richmond-Delta and is about the government's attitude toward capital punishment. I was sent this copy of an editorial which appeared in our local paper, and I should like to read it. It states:

● (1210)

Morally, intellectually and psychologically there is a glaring irrational streak in the federal government's attitude toward the sanctity of human life.

The Trudeau cabinet is committed—some of its members emotionally so—to the total abolition of capital punishment. Yet it not only condones but actively encourages an enterprise which can endanger the lives of millions.

That enterprise, of course, is the peddling of CANDU nuclear reactors to unstable nations.

There has been ample evidence, including India's behaviour, of the dangers inherent in CANDU sales. Now from the U.S. energy research and development administration comes a terrifying report.

A study completed for that body six months ago, but only just made public, says that, based on the output from just half the reactors that the International Atomic Energy Agency has projected would be sold to the less developed nations in the next 15 years, "the annual production of plutonium in terms of minimum bomb equivalents is truly staggering." The 46 countries studied, according to the survey, "could annually produce some 15,100 kilograms (33,022 pounds) of plutonium by 1990—enough to produce 3,002 small nuclear explosives."

In the face of this, continuing CANDU sales to unstable countries like Argentina is to bury our heads in the sands of balance sheets.

It makes a mockery of the government's cliché-ridden expressions of concern for the human predicament.

That is the concern of many of my constituents. I wanted to point that out to the House because I think it is very appropriate at this time. I received another letter, from a young lady in Quebec, which I was not even sure I should