

the public execution. Mr. Diefenbaker's great-grandfather said that those Scottish people in North York turned up in large numbers and there was a great celebration. During the ceremonies at the execution, four people had their pockets picked. This simply indicates that the argument that the fear of capital punishment will greatly reduce the number of offences is not completely tenable or indeed tenable at all.

I would like to close my remarks by reminding Hon. Members of something we should all remember. Crime rates invariably go up in direct proportion to rates of unemployment and poverty. When, in a country like this, there are one million more people below the poverty line in the last five years, one can find the origins of crime. People are left with no choice and they act out of desperation. How many Canadians without previous records have been convicted of murder, first or second-degree, after holding up a service station or a convenience store—although that is a little risky nowadays—and out of fright, terror and desperation ending up shooting people?

I am not allocating political blame, but am trying to be as non-partisan as possible. When we do something about the ills of society, the things that lead people to crime, when we put people to work so they may live in some kind of dignity and comfort, when people have reasonably equal opportunities in this dog-eat-dog world of ours, I submit that crime rates will go down and the feelings of those who want to reinstate the death penalty will change remarkably.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes remaining, it will be very difficult to put forward the basic principles that emerge in a debate like this. One principle is the question of the deterrence of capital punishment, and the other is the ethics of a state regulating the behaviour of society at any given time.

I will hardly be able to deal with the first point in the limited time available. I would simply say that so far, all studies produced for those who believe that capital punishment is a deterrent have failed to give that assurance by demonstrating that capital punishment is the answer that will ensure that crime is reduced and society is safer as a result of the imposition of such a measure.

In the United States, capital punishment has been introduced in some states. All studies done there point to the fact that society suffers from the same or perhaps even a greater rate of crime and murders, regardless of whether or not a particular state has introduced the measure of capital punishment.

The question that brings me into this debate is whether or not it is ethical for any state which has been given the responsibility by society to govern to introduce capital punishment and in that manner to reply to a murder in the cold-blooded way of taking another life. The question is whether or not such behaviour on the part of a state is ethical. I would be happy if time permitted me to go into this in greater length, but I would submit that it is definitely not ethical for a state to adopt that

method of dealing with murder in a civilized society. I would call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 42(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

Adjournment Debate

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

FOOD—IRRADIATION WITH COBALT-60. (B) SCIENTISTS' RESERVATIONS—SAFETY OF PRACTICE

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the issue of food irradiation is one that preoccupies many Canadians from coast to coast. It is best represented by way of an example of a letter I received just two weeks ago from a person in North Vancouver. I will read a couple of paragraphs from the letter just to give the House an indication of the sentiments that accompany this issue. The letter says:

After learning of arguments pro and con, it is my position that irradiation of food presents potential health hazards that cannot be ignored.

I am requesting that all proposals and changes to regulations that would allow food irradiation be stopped; that all importation or sale of irradiated food be stopped and that all existing regulations that allow irradiation, importation or sale of irradiated food, be immediately rescinded.

• (1800)

This letter sets the tone for my brief intervention and I am very grateful to see the Parliamentary Secretary here tonight.

You will recall that on November 27, 1986, at page 1595 of *Hansard* the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) said on this question:

Mr. Speaker, the process of irradiating certain foods, such as in the treatment of potatoes, onions, wheat, and flour, has been used in the United States for some period of time. It is being used in Canada as well.

As a result of research I conducted since then it turns out that the irradiation of food has been legal in the U.S. for some time but not widely used. Mr. Sheppard, Chief of the Manufactured Food Division of Canada's Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, when he testified in committee on December 3, 1986, in response to the question as to whether or not irradiated food products from the U.S. are imported into Canada, said:

Spices are irradiated and it is quite possible, although I am not aware of it, that certain American products with irradiated spices are available on the Canadian market.

There are, I am told, some small experimental stations but no commercial food irradiation operations in the U.S. At present there are no regulations governing the importation of irradiated food and, perhaps more important, no practical