

Criminal Code

Mr. Caouette: Where they are secure.

Mr. Gauthier: Call it security or what you will, but I say prison is not a deterrent to murder. Far from it, to some people, prisons are boarding schools. I heard it from no other source than the prisoners themselves.

In fact, if you discuss at all with these people, you will see to what extent they have grown perfect. Which means that, so long as man has not reached that degree of spirituality where the senses no longer influence the spirit, laws will be needed to protect society from certain individuals, in whom the beast dominates the spirit.

I believe we still have a long way to go before we reach that level of idealist perfection.

Let us keep both feet on the ground, and listen to those individuals or groups who want to retain the death penalty in certain specific cases.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I take the liberty of referring to literature gleaned out of some 2,000 letters I have received, of which I shall quote only a few.

At a meeting of the Normandin Local of the Catholic Farmers' Union in my riding, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Whereas criminal deaths and armed robberies are constantly increasing, even with the death penalty in Canada, the C.F.U. local of this parish, in general assembly, through this resolution, protests strongly against the eventuality of the abolition of said penalty, in the sincere belief that even now, capital punishment instills fear into criminals.

Mr. Speaker, it is precisely this resolution which confirms the arguments I expressed a moment ago to the effect that fear is the beginning of wisdom, for prisoners as well as others.

I received today, as other members probably—

● (6:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must advise the hon. member that the time allotted to him has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the house give unanimous consent to the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I only have for two or three minutes more, just to say that the hon. members have probably received the same telegram which reads as follows:

During the general assembly of the Federation of municipal policemen of the province of Quebec representing more than 6,000 municipal policemen, which took place on March 26, 1966, it was decided unanimously:

(A) To object to the abolition of the death penalty.

(B) To promote the creation of a national compensation fund to assist dependants of murder victims.

The Federation of municipal policemen of the province of Quebec.

Paul-Emile Blain, secretary.

I have also a letter from the party of the National Unity of Canada, whose members are strongly opposed to the abolition of the death penalty. It is too long to be read in the house.

I have another letter from the UCC of La Doré, who are also against the abolition of the death penalty.

Moreover, I have before me a letter from the Federation of retail business and services of the province of Quebec, of which hon. members have probably received a copy. The members of this association are also against the abolition of the death penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on quoting the many documents I received, pointing out the reasons why the various associations are against the abolition of the death penalty.

As a matter of fact, in most cases, those reasons have already been put forward by members who required that the house should not vote in favour of the resolution now before us, or at least that the death penalty should be maintained until society had reached, as I said earlier, a degree of perfection that will only be attained in the angelic state, because we must tell ourselves over and over again that what gives a man food for thought today is fear. I believe that by removing this fear, the murderer will commit more murders.

If a murderer gets a life sentence, he must say to himself: It is not worse to be in jail for murdering one person than for killing two, three or even ten more. This amounts to saying: I shall spend my life in jail just the same.

Can you imagine such reasoning, Mr. Speaker? You realize what might happen. That is why some people even ask that the law should be made more severe and strict,