

*Capital Punishment*

conversation before I would lose my temper and begin to shout at my old friend.

The thought I expressed to him, and which I commend to Members of the House, is that there was one thing on which we could agree, that this was a great country. One of my constituents could harangue and harass me for an hour and a half, telling me in so many words that I was wrong and stupid, while knowing that he could go home that afternoon and not be arrested for expressing his views which were so contrary to mine. He would not be evicted from his house. He would not lose his job. These things would have happened to him in many countries which do not permit democratic views to be expressed and do not permit the challenge of authority. I knew that the worst that could happen to me because he and I disagreed was that in the next election, if he so desired, he could vote for a candidate from another Party.

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I told him that if my record and the position I have taken on issues such as unemployment, housing, inflation and all the other questions parliamentarians deal with, a position with which that person agreed, were less important than the single question of capital punishment about which we disagreed, he should exercise his democratic right and vote for another candidate, one who believed in capital punishment.

I do not know whether he took my advice, and voted for or against me. I do know that I was re-elected and I have been re-elected several times since then. So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I intend to vote for abolition and against the reimposition of capital punishment.

I have been pleased with the debate to which I listened today. The arguments presented by Members who have spoken on both sides of the question have been thoughtful and conciliatory, not like some of the debate I heard in earlier days. I say again that I intend to vote for abolition and against capital punishment on this occasion as I have on previous occasions.

**Mr. Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, I respect the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) for his comments on the question of capital punishment. However I would like to ask him a question. Given that we now have better high-tech in medicine and all the life-saving devices, would the Hon. Member not feel in his heart that the lower statistics on death per population from stabbings, shootings and so on, are possibly because we have better equipment and knowledge now than, say, 10 or 15 years ago? Is that not the reason why the figures are down?

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I have not researched the reasons. I do know that one reason we have a fantastically lower rate in Canada than in the United States is that we have not adopted the insane idea that every person should be entitled to carry and implicitly to use a gun. I think we have fewer murders in the whole of Canada than there are

in the Cities of New York and Detroit. I am quite happy that this is a fact. I certainly hope that direction will continue.

I cannot say categorically why we have fewer deaths than before, but I can say that it certainly proves that we do not need capital punishment as a deterrent to murder.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille) has the floor, and then I will recognize the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson).

**Mr. de Corneille:** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment, then a question for my colleague. We were looking previously at the fact that there is a need for the Canadian public to be able to debate not only capital punishment but, it would seem to me, the causes of murder, which is really part of this whole question of deterrence. One of the reasons people have expressed for wanting to adopt capital punishment is that it is a deterrent to murder. They are also concerned about people getting out of prison too soon. Would it not seem wise for the Government to allow the people of Canada, through a committee, to discuss whether or not they believe in capital punishment? Most clearly we would vote only in principle for the reinstatement of capital punishment, and we would only be discussing the terms of reference of the committee, which are strictly limited to what offences carry the death penalty and what methods should be used. It is commanded on the basis of that to prepare a Bill to carry it out. It is not recommended here to discuss the subject of capital punishment.

Would it not be more democratic to ask the Government to consider amending this resolution so that it would have as its first principal clause that the committee discuss with the Canadian people whether or not there should be capital punishment, and if so what offence would carry the death penalty and then what methods would be used? That probably would have received more sympathy.

Second, I ask my colleague, would it not be helpful if in fact we were able to discuss in that same committee, and hear the views of the Canadian people, on how we would be able to improve the things they are concerned about, the sentencing, the violence and all those things which would lead to capital punishment?

**Mr. Orlikow:** The Hon. Member asked a good question but he is asking it of the wrong Member. The suggestion he made was contained precisely in the amendment proposed by my friend and colleague, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). Unfortunately, the House voted against that amendment.

Yes, we ought to give a great deal more thought and study to the reasons for violence, the reasons for murder. We ought to look very carefully at the one democratic country in which some states have brought back capital punishment, namely, the United States. If we did, we would see that the vast majority of the people who have suffered the penalty of the death sentence in those states are people who are poor, non-