

*Capital Punishment*

Canada, would the Hon. Member have the impression he would be an accessory to a premeditated crime? We must not forget, Mr. Speaker, that if the Canadian Government decides to reinstate capital punishment, certainly it would be a kind of retribution, as the Hon. Member said, but on the other hand, it would be premeditated retribution through the judicial process, and in the final instance people would say, it is because the Government passed the Bill. But as an individual taking part in this decision, one of 282, would he personally feel to some extent guilty of being an accessory to a premeditated crime?

**Mr. Daubney:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the Hon. Member for his comments.

• (1500)

[*English*]

The question he poses is a more difficult one to answer, but if I understood the question correctly, I think the answer is yes.

I have certainly gone through the moral agony of this debate myself. I realized that there was the possibility that I as a single Member of Parliament could, if this motion were to be defeated by one vote, make the difference because of the points I made in my speech about whether or not an innocent person might die or whether or not we may see more murderers loose on the streets as well as all the other arguments I made. I realized that I had to vote with my conscience on this issue and that if I had an opportunity to make a difference in this debate, I had to exercise that opportunity despite the views, many of them strongly held, of my constituents. It is a debate we have all had to go through.

**Mr. Tupper:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to compliment my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney), for his presentation this afternoon, particularly because it was so well researched. I felt that our hon. colleague had given a great deal of thought to his presentation and that he had looked at many very fundamental data relative to deterrence in particular but to other aspects of the criminal justice system as well.

I would like to compliment the Hon. Member as well on the sincerity with which he presented his thoughts on a very, very difficult subject. Recognizing his legal background and the fact that he made a substantive point of his feeling that Canada could still afford to maintain within our prison system criminals who were found guilty of the utmost crime, he has undoubtedly spent a great deal of time thinking about how the criminal system and the parole system could be improved to protect Canadians: I would like to ask the Hon. Member if he could share with the House his thoughts on penal reform.

**Mr. Daubney:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind comments and his very pertinent question. As he knows, I am Chairman of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. The points he made have been of concern to me and my committee colleagues from all Parties for some period of time. In fact, yesterday at a meeting of the committee, we decided that two areas which we would investigate in

the fall and start to research now would relate to the very question he asked.

We have not yet had a review of the corrections system in Parliament. Members like our distinguished Speaker who have been here for a while will recall the MacGuigan report of about 10 years ago. I think it is the view of the committee that, in any event, it is time for parliamentarians to take another look at the corrections system, particularly with a view to what can be done to improve rehabilitation.

Related to that is the whole question of parole. This is a matter which has been of particular concern to me as an Ottawa Member. Here in Ottawa, we have experienced a dreadful case about which I cannot speak in detail because it is still *sub judice*, that is, the Ruygrok case. I might add in parenthesis that I had the opportunity of meeting with Mr. Ruygrok, the father of the social worker in a halfway house who was murdered. It was a very touching meeting. He told me early on in this debate that he was against the death penalty. Despite what had happened to his daughter, he knew capital punishment would not have kept her alive.

Going back to my main point, the committee decided to look at the parole system beginning in the fall with a view to ensuring that tragedies like the Ruygrok case and others which happen all too frequently in Canada will not happen again. We intend to see that procedures are put in place that, to the extent humanly possible, would not allow such dreadful things to happen.

There is a lot of room for improvement in the parole and corrections systems. I would also suggest that there is room for improvement in sentencing and I welcome the recent developments initiated by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) in that regard. I can assure the House that the Justice Committee will be giving a great deal of attention to all of these important issues.

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, while I am strongly opposed to the reinstatement of the death penalty in Canada, I want to start by making it absolutely clear that I believe murder to be a most serious and heinous crime and that we in government at all levels must do everything in our power to reduce and prevent murder. The fact that I and others in this House are opposed to capital punishment does not mean that we are soft on murder, nor does it mean that we care more for the criminal than for the victim. That allegation is pure rhetoric, hokum and a red herring in a debate like this.

I believe very strongly that we should act to prevent murder but we should do something that is effective and meaningful and not something like the death penalty which is simply an illusion of action. Many of those who favour the death penalty say it is necessary to protect the public, to protect the police, to protect corner-store owners and to protect old people and children who walk the streets. Once again, I agree that we must protect those people, but there is absolutely no evidence showing that the death penalty offers this protection.