

course, will resort to techniques and excuses for delaying a decision which is inevitable.

I have heard of some colleagues who are frantically polling their constituents by means of thousands of questionnaires. Well, here speaks a rather old fashioned parliamentarian. I had understood that my role as a member of parliament, in our system of responsible and representative government, was not to be beholden to opinion polls, in which oftentimes the questions are over simplified. I really wonder if we should take refuge behind somewhat simplistic questionnaires. Rather, should we not tell people where we stand and, if they do not approve, they have many opportunities to tell us that they do not approve. I have taken part in five general elections since 1962. Surely, the people of the constituency I have the privilege of representing have had many opportunities to indicate to me whether they approve or do not approve of my being an abolitionist. I have never hidden it. I have discussed it at election time, but I have not sent out a questionnaire on the subject, and I have no intention of doing so.

I am an abolitionist because I can find no evidence that convinces me that the death penalty is a deterrent. Quite the contrary, I feel that the certain knowledge that nothing lies ahead but the death penalty may well mean that hijackers, or perpetrators of other crimes punishable by death, may take a much more fatalistic and devil-may-care attitude. They have nothing to lose. The death penalty exercises a baneful effect on the administration of justice, arousing mistaken sympathy for the defendant even when guilty. The cabinet surely must understand that statement. Capital punishment cases make bad law. In many jurisdictions increasing difficulty has been found in getting juries to find defendants guilty because of the cruel finality of the punishment involved. Hanging brutalizes us. Hanging is a defeat of society. Hanging substitutes the violence of the state for the violence of a criminal. I assert that there is no proof that the death penalty has special deterrent power against crime, and up to now I have heard no evidence during the speeches of the retentionists which proves otherwise. For the state to take life as an act of retribution demeans the state and makes hangmen of us all.

Throughout my public life I have been trying to find the key to a mystery. I suppose the answer is understood by sociologists. It is this: why should there be such an emotional fervour surrounding debate on this issue? As Dr. Thorsten Selling put it:

Attitudes toward it are rooted deep in the sentiments of people and arouse powerful emotions whenever its justification is questioned. Antagonists bombard each others with "facts" (which are rarely facts at all). Beliefs and opinions are offered, often without substantiation, in support of one or the other viewpoint, and the Holy Writ is liberally quoted by both sides.

I am grateful for the eloquent and timely statement on capital punishment, on the very matter of quoting the Bible to support a point of view, which was given recently by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, who now join many other religious denominations in Canada in their opposition to capital punishment. The Catholic bishops spoke of the scandal that is inherent in utilizing selective parts of scripture in support of a fundamentalist point of view. I think it is a sad commentary that we have to resort

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to these techniques. I happen to believe that one's religion or lack of it is a private matter, and people who parade their piety make me nervous as well as suspicious. Nevertheless, it is comforting to have the major churches in our country speak clearly and without equivocation about this issue.

Some parade what to me—and it is a plural society, we all admit that—are narrow biblical quotations, forgetting or deliberately ignoring what I suggest is an enlarged and uplifting addition to the Bible, namely what we find in the New Testament. Fortunately, we are not engaged in a theological exercise. I certainly would not presume to be an expert in this area. What I can do is to add to the sum of what I think is social policy, to add an opinion, supported eventually I hope by a vote for abolition. I am helped in this by scientific inquiry, but scientific inquiry is not an end in itself. It provides only the data upon which politicians must take decisions.

As a New Brunswicker, the most convincing fact to me is that the State of Maine, which shares a common border with us, abolished capital punishment in the year 1886, almost 90 years ago. Actually, Maine had abolished it before that, and returned capital punishment for about three years until the final abolition took place in 1886. Maine people and New Brunswick people come from the same socio-economic background. Their geography in relation to their respective countries, the United States and Canada, is similar. I have checked the figures, and I am afraid I am repeating myself because I used this in the debate in 1967. However, I was glad to see that the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) picked up this example of Maine and New Brunswick.

As I say, I have checked the figures from 1886 to 1971. For those who are made uncomfortable by concepts in world or macro terms, I thought this backyard or micro-analysis should prove relevant and helpful. I find that the murder rate in the state of Maine is not revelantly different from the rate in the province of New Brunswick, one with capital punishment and the other where capital punishment has been abolished for 90 years. During the years that capital punishment has been a major and important issue I have had a chance to read statements on this subject, statements which to me go the complete range from the sublime to the shrill. I will not take up the time of the House to list those writers who have impressed me most, although I must say that Albert Camus' "Reflections on the Guillotine" and Arthur Koestler's "Reflections on Hanging" are eloquent books which require no embellishment from me.

A more up-to-date statement, if members are made nervous by books written a few years ago, appeared in The New Republic of February 3, 1973, and a couple of paragraphs are relevant to this debate. The editorial was discussing the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States of last spring that the death penalty as now administered in the United States is unconstitutional. The editorial reads:

The argument for the death penalty—the only civilized argument, since all that's left otherwise is vengeance—is that it may deter. It obviously does not deter numerous crimes, but it may—no one can be sure one way or the other—deter some premeditated crimes, like hijacking, whose commission is contemplated by a sane, cold-blooded, smart, well-informed, calculating person. Ever