

dream up ideas on how to escape. What deterrent is there in a life sentence once one is serving a life sentence?

We have heard all the arguments about whether hanging or execution is a deterrent or is not, but our whole society is built on the deterrence of punishment of one kind or another. If that were not so, we would not need to worry about any kind of fines today. We would not have to worry about policemen issuing tickets here on the hill, in the city, or on the highways for speeding. We would not need to bother locking our shops and our houses because breaking and entry would not be an offence punishable in any way. The whole thread of our society is based on punishment for deviation from the accepted rule.

There are many changes that occur as society evolves, and I am not one to suggest that society should remain rigid. We can all think back 50 to 100 years when crimes which are laughed at today were considered capital offences. At one time the stealing of a loaf of bread carried the death penalty on conviction, and pickpockets had their hands cut off. Those punishments were on the books and were meted out for their deterrent effects, just as all the punishments that are on the law books today are meted out as deterrents. It was decided, as society evolved, that certain crimes did not call for quite such severe penalties as others. Whether that added to the incidence of crime I am not able to say, but the principle remains that if we are to continue our society as we know it, we must have some penalty that is a deterrent.

It may be that life imprisonment is a sufficient deterrent for some people. I think that life imprisonment might keep many in this House from committing that final act that they might sometimes think of committing. But what can we expect a prisoner under a life sentence to think, when all he has to lose by killing anyone in sight is a further life imprisonment?

The basic premise is so simple, so easy to understand, that I do not understand what the government in presenting this bill, and the abolitionists in supporting it, can possibly be thinking. They say they want a safer Canada for innocent citizens. How can you make a country safer for innocent citizens by removing from the law enforcement agencies the final tool that they have for the protection of society?

● (1550)

I spoke earlier about the duty of the state. I heard the Solicitor General say that the state does not have the right to impose the death penalty to protect the innocent citizens of Canada. What can the citizens expect of the state if they cannot expect protection? In fact something like 80 per cent of the people in Canada seem to be demanding that these days. I have yet to hear the government explain the difference between executing an enemy of the state in the form of a murderer or of a person guilty of treason or piracy. What is the difference between executing one of those despicable people and calling upon an ordinary citizen in time of war to kill another kind of enemy of the state? To me the difference is minuscule, and the explanations offered are not satisfactory.

I would welcome any explanation which could answer some of these arguments. Over the months I have listened to the arguments, but there has been no explanation about

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how we are going to keep these heinous criminals from harming Canadians. There has been no explanation of the difference between killing in war an enemy of the state and the killing of a person who on July 17 becomes an enemy of the state. I think the people of Canada want an answer. They have let their opinion be known, and the majority of this House in its so-called democratic way has given its answer. I suspect that the people of Canada in their democratic way will give their answer the next time they get a chance.

I have mentioned some practical considerations with regard to keeping murderers in prison. Perhaps I should say impractical considerations, because I do not think it is possible. Some would raise the matter of cost. It is certainly costly to keep a prisoner locked up. I am told that the cost is about \$18,000 per year per prisoner. At one time I might have attached more significance to that cost than I do now. It is obvious that this government in the past eight years has paid very little attention to costs of any kind, but I think it is fair to say that one should not argue about human life in terms of dollar costs.

People have argued that juries and judges can make mistakes, and that innocent people can be convicted. In my remarks at second reading of this bill I quoted an old friend and jurist in Vancouver, the Hon. John Valentine Clyne. He wrote to me with great concern at the time of the earlier stages of the consideration of this bill, because he was concerned about what would happen in Canada. When he was on the bench he saw many of these cases. He was concerned that too many people would feel that the system of justice in Canada would not serve to protect an innocent accused person, but he was convinced from his experience on the bench that the system available to an accused in Canada, whether he be rich, as the hon. member for Timiskaming said, or whether he be poor, assures that there is no danger of having a wrongfully accused person executed.

However, as an aside, I ask what difference would it make if a person was executed or if he was imprisoned wrongfully for 25 years? There is no way the state can bring back a life, but there is also no way the state can repay a man for 25 years of wrongful imprisonment. Arguments such as that should lead those who think that way to spend the rest of their lives in bed because, if they dare set foot out of bed, they might break their leg, be run down by a car, or fall down a flight of stairs. That kind of thinking is so antiquated and backward that it hardly deserves comment at this time.

In a week or so we shall be having visitors from around the world at the Olympic Games. One month ago Vancouver was host to representatives of 136 countries in the United Nations for the Habitat Conference. These major events invite violent visitors to this country to perpetrate their vile acts. The passage of this bill will leave Canada powerless to control that kind of violence. We know that particularly this year there have been special rules put into effect for immigration purposes so that we can keep undesirable aliens from entering Canada and causing trouble at such things as the Habitat Conference and the Olympic Games. However, we know that people can come across the border either by subterfuge or by sneaking across.