

and it is without any twang of conscience that I intend to vote against this bill on second reading, at the report stage, and at third reading as well.

Abolition of the death penalty brings up the simple question, do we abolish the death penalty? Should members of this House in their wisdom decide to carry out that plan I believe it will mark a dark moment in Canadian legal history, and of which I want no part. What would we really accomplish by abolishing the death penalty from the Criminal Code? I submit to you, absolutely nothing, for in doing so will we have truly abolished capital punishment? I think not. We will simply have taken control of capital punishment out of the hands of the state and legal authorities, where it belongs, and put it into the hands of those who have no scruples or compunction as to how it should be used. It will then rest entirely at the discretion of the criminal and criminal element who will use it without fear, and certainly without compassion.

In the ten years since the abolition question has come up in this country we have seen an increase in crime and criminal tendencies unheard of before in the history of this country. Just quoting a few statistics, and I do not want to get into statistics because I truly believe they can be made to show whatever you want to show, in Quebec in 1955 there were 17 murders, and in 1965 there were 53. However, last year there were 217.

The Solicitor General has stated there has been no disproportionate increase in the number of violent crimes. It seems to me someone has some figures wrong some place. In 1966 the number of violent crimes committed totalled 69,656, and in 1973 that total climbed to 114,760. That is an increase some place along the line of 65 per cent in those seven years with crimes such as murder, manslaughter, rape, and wounding included in those totals. As recently as February 17 of this year it was reported for the first time in metropolitan Toronto that the number of murders committed during a period of just over one month, from January 1 to roughly February 15, 1976, exceeded the number of people killed in car accidents.

I certainly do not intend to get into a discussion of statistics with the minister or any member of this House because it is true, as I have said, that statistics can be made to do or show what is required of them. This question cannot be settled by the use of statistics. It can only be solved by each member of this House reaching a well thought out personal decision, a decision such as I have spent much time over the past year and a half trying to reach.

I would say there is no one in the House who would desire more than I to be able to say: yes, society in Canada and the people have reached a stage in our evolution where the death penalty is no longer needed, and we have reached a stage in this country where people have a respect for the law and a respect for each other's right to the extent that a deterrent such as the death penalty is no longer required.

Such is certainly not the case, and I am sure the minister and members will have to agree that there has been an increase in violent crime in this country, not just murders but acts of violence perpetrated as never before in our cities right across this land. I believe, fervently and with all sincerity, that the capital punishment section of the Criminal Code is a deterrent, and that is what we must

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base our final decision upon when deciding the eventual conclusion of this debate, that is, whether capital punishment will be retained or abolished.

There are many ways in which my opinions differ from those of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I have to agree wholeheartedly with him when he explained that his belief that the death penalty is a deterrent took root during his early experience in the armed forces, an experience shared by many members of this fine House. I hope not too many in this honourable House have come face to face with death as did that hon. member, whether during World War II or the Korean war. I would certainly hope our young men never have to face that proposition in the future, like many others, and like one or two in this House who have served in our police forces, who entered a building in the dead of night which had been broken into, and who have come face to face with an armed and determined assailant. If any of us had this experience or this confrontation I do not think he would be able to stand up and say that at no time is death a deterrent, or that death is not uppermost in the individual's mind at that time. In that event I do not think there would be many questions about which way we would vote.

Let me relate a couple of experiences I have been told about which took place in two separate border cities in Canada. These are not personal experiences, but they are experiences of others I know personally and with whom I have had contact. Both were police officers who came upon armed and determined criminals, not from this country, during the commission of an attempted robbery. In both these unrelated instances the two police officers confronted the criminals in question. Both officers were facing death as the criminals in question were determined, armed, and with an advantage over the police officers. They were determined not to be apprehended.

In both these cases the criminals asked the police officers point blank if the death penalty was still in effect in this country for the murder of a police officer. Both officers replied that it was in respect of the murder of a police officer in the performance of his duty. I am assured that in both instances the criminals at this point turned over their firearms to the officers and the arrests were completed.

Someone may be able to convince me that the death penalty is no deterrent, but he would certainly have a hard time, as would any member of the House, convincing either of those police officers. In those particular instances the death penalty was a deterrent, and one which in all likelihood saved their lives.

I would agree with the Solicitor General that the death penalty cannot be proved by statistics to have an effect on gangland killings and hired killers. However, I believe the death penalty must have a deterrent effect on those who would commit premeditated murder as a last resort, and those who pause for the shortest period of time to weigh and balance the consequences of their actions. This is just one more thought put in the person's mind at this most crucial moment.

Retention of the death penalty I feel may save one, two, three, four or five lives of Canadian citizens, whether they be police officers or otherwise, over the period of a year. If the retention of the death penalty in the Criminal Code