

Criminal Code

no intention of allowing human life to be scorned.

In view of the lateness of the hour, may I be allowed to close these few remarks I wanted to make in my own name, because my conscience had shown me where my duty lies. My constituents of Laval told me: "Look at St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary, at Bordeaux jail, at the women's jail, all institutions within Laval constituency, and you shall know where your duty lies".

My duty I said it a minute ago, is to favour the maintenance of capital punishment, for the good of the community.

● (11:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Lawrence Watson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take up too much time at this late hour on the fourth day on the debate on capital punishment, but I do want to say a few words to substantiate my reasons for voting the way I intend to vote tomorrow evening.

We have listened now to over 50 speeches both for the abolition and for the retention of capital punishment. I have listened to all speeches with a great deal of interest and believe that, whether one favours abolition or retention, the members who have spoken have put forward good arguments on both sides.

I will not go into detail, quote figures and extracts from the Bible, because I believe that regardless of the way you look at quotations from the Bible interpretations can be made both for and against capital punishment. So far as figures are concerned, many people have done a lot of research into the subject and I am sure it would only be repetitious if I were to put them on the record again.

On March 24, the second day of the debate, there were many outstanding speeches. Since I have had the pleasure of sitting in this house I do not think I have listened with more interest to honest speeches coming from the hearts of people with strong feelings on the issue of capital punishment.

I am sure that all members of parliament over the past two years have had much material sent them both in support of the retention and of the abolition of capital punishment. I have in my hand at the present time a publication regarding the death penalty in America. I have here two volumes from the Canadian Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. I have also another handbook

[Mr. Rochon.]

entitled "Alternatives to Capital Punishment". I have statistics regarding murder from the years 1961 to 1964, and I could go on to name many more volumes and petitions which have been sent to my office.

I recall a meeting held one year ago in room 200, when I believe we had a member from the British houses of parliament present who had taken a great deal of interest in the debate on the abolition of the death penalty in Great Britain. At the meeting I was a little disappointed, due to the fact that I felt that only one side of the story was told at that time. Contrary to what transpired at that meeting, I think the speeches which have been made in the last two weeks in this house have definitely put forward both sides of the story.

I am not going to take issue with anyone who has different opinions from me, because they hold firm convictions in the attitude they are taking. But one thing which has perturbed me a little in my thinking, and to which I have not found the answer, is that for some reason or another most lawyers seem to take the attitude that the death penalty should be abolished. I am not a lawyer and am unfamiliar with court room techniques; but from the layman's point of view I do not understand why a good many lawyers tend to follow this line of thought.

I have felt for a long time that some revision may be required in the procedures of our courts of justice. If a man is in trouble and can afford to hire the best lawyers in the land, it is his privilege to do so. When a man who is being prosecuted does not have this financial ability, the state will find a lawyer for him. This is one area in which our courts may not be doing complete justice to an accused person. It is possible we do not get the same type of lawyer to defend as we do to prosecute. The government can engage a topnotch lawyer with all the necessary money available for research and for his fee. On the other hand the state appointed lawyer may have to settle for \$400 or \$500 for research and for his fee, compared with many thousands of dollars paid to his counterpart. This is one area we might examine. Possibly my hon. friends who are lawyers and who are more familiar with this situation could do something to bring about a change.

● (11:20 p.m.)

I wish to refer briefly to some impressions I have gained while listening to this debate. The general preoccupation seems to have been with the poor man who has committed