

*Criminal Code*

to kill for purposes of personal ambition and profit unthought of in the past.

It has not been proved, therefore, that our civilization has reached the point where it can do without the death penalty, which surely gives food for thought to people bent on doing wrong.

There is another thing which impressed me a great deal, Mr. Speaker, and I think that members of the house should not minimize this intervention: representatives of police forces at every level have unanimously requested the retention of the death penalty.

We, legislators, must by all means support the law enforcement officers who are certainly justified in asking us to retain the death penalty in the present circumstances, because they realize too that we are not ready for the abolition of capital punishment.

The time will come perhaps when we can abolish the death penalty. But until I am given proof that subversive activities against the established order, sometimes with violence, can be controlled in our country, I shall not accept the abolition of capital punishment.

Mr. Speaker, as long as it has not been proven to me, that reasonable prevention of organized crime has been set up here, I shall refuse to vote for the abolition of the death penalty.

As long as it not proven to me, Mr. Speaker, that we are organized to provide efficient rehabilitation of criminals here, I shall refuse to vote for the abolition of the death penalty.

As long as it has not been proven to me that we have enough prisons, modern prisons, built according to 20th-century standards, to house all those prisoners or criminals and keep them busy at something constructive, I shall refuse to let the death penalty go.

As long as we do not have here enough experts, psychologists, sociologists and, finally, specialists in all fields who will help us precisely to rehabilitate those people we want to keep in jail until they die, I say it will be illusive to advocate the abolition of the death penalty.

No. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we must be realistic and say to ourselves that Canada took a great step forward in 1961, with the passage of legislation defining capital crime, capital murder.

I think we have gone through a stage. The next one will entail a reform of the penal code, in which there will be gradations in

crimes; the granting of a little more leeway to judges; the organization of those jails where inmates will be detained for life, according to modern standards; the training of those technicians and specialists who will look after rehabilitation; better preparation for ourselves to carry out prevention, of juvenile delinquency for instance; the continuation of the war on poverty, precisely to prevent the fostering of young bandits in the most deprived sectors of society.

All these things represent the stage we have to go through today before abolishing this crime deterrent called capital punishment and to act otherwise would be deceptive, I believe.

Mr. Speaker, I will now conclude my remarks. I will vote against the abolition of capital punishment, because in my opinion it is a hasty and deceptive legislation, and before passing any such legislation, we should rather undertake the reforms I mentioned earlier, such as modern penitentiaries as well as the training of a qualified staff, and later a legislative reform to cope with this new situation.

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, the resolution now before us has been discussed and carefully studied for many years in various countries.

It is not the first time the Canadian parliament deals with this question. I am sure this debate will give rise to an objective exchange of views that will enlighten the Canadian people on a matter that is more and more in the mind and conscience of Canadian parliamentarians.

It was difficult for the work group which considered this question for some weeks to bring forward in this house a better method of discussion that should not appeal to one's feelings and sentimentality and partisanship.

I hope this debate goes on in this serene atmosphere, free from all strain that might have distorted the findings of our study in some cases.

Each one of us, Mr. Speaker, will have to vote freely at the end of this debate on the timeliness of abolishing or retaining in our statutes the death penalty for criminals found guilty of homicides.

May I be permitted, Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks, to embark on a digression and confess to the house that, in 1960, when we dealt with Bill C-6 intended to abolish the death penalty, I took part in the debate at that time. Then I made a study of