

they be back out, either by impulse or on parole. After all, when you finally analyse the thinking of dangerous criminals in relation to the system of automatic commutation that this government has obviously practised in the last several years, why would they not try to escape? What is the deterrent? What is the penalty when recaptured and returned from whence they escaped? What have they lost?

● (2150)

When I say I favour capital punishment, I do not necessarily mean in the form that has been followed in the past. I am sure a more humane and painless method could be devised to accomplish the same end. On the other hand, some people would then say a criminal would be afforded too easy a way out, and before you know it a whole new debate would be opened up.

In conscientiously trying to assess the feelings of my pro-retentionist constituents on this subject, I felt a great percentage could be persuaded to change their minds from pro-capital punishment to abolition if the record of imprisonment in past years, particularly in the last 12 months, had proven successful. I think our correctional record has been an utter disgrace and has deteriorated to the point where it has become a source of jokes and cartoons. Regardless of who or what is the cause of this deplorable situation, the result of these escapes is certainly not a joking matter, particularly when the public is automatically subjected to further threats to their safety with these criminals at large, perhaps even in their own communities.

"Uncivilized" and "barbaric" are two of the favourite terms used by abolitionists to describe the taking of a life by the state through execution. I wonder how many innocent children and adults in our communities will have to die before Canada's "uncivilized" and "barbaric" parole and bail regulations are revised. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents could rightly accuse the state of allowing their relatives and friends to be murdered, just as surely as if the state had executed them. Since when is it civilized to trade innocent lives for criminal lives for the sake of rehabilitation programs, valid in theory, perhaps, but discredited by the fact that they have been carried to such irresponsible and tragic extremes? Please do not interpret my remarks, Mr. Speaker, as an indication of my being against rehabilitation programs which, if properly administered, are the ultimate approach to penology, but surely the law should attach some value to the lives of murder victims as well as murderers.

In conclusion, I would like to touch on the preconceived opinion of many adults that our young people, particularly at the secondary school level, are basically abolitionists. This is not necessarily so. During the Easter recess I visited the pupils of several of the secondary schools in my riding, and the pupils of others visited me here in Ottawa. During these visits capital punishment was discussed to at least some degree. Our future citizens are also concerned about what has happened to our law enforcement structure, and because of this past and perhaps future concern an average of more than 50 per cent are in favour of capital punishment. Here, again, I expect their opinion could be altered if and when our penal system proves credible.

### *Capital Punishment*

I have taken longer than I anticipated in this debate, but I trust that the degree of genuine concern and sincerity that I feel personally and is felt by my constituents has been projected in a way that all members of this House appreciate these feelings. It would benefit all of us as members in this House not to forget that we have an obligation and a privilege to exercise our free vote on this bill in such a way as not to leave anyone with a troubled conscience.

**Mr. Ellwood Madill (Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on Bill C-2 I wish to make some observations about the feelings of my constituents. The constituents of the riding of Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe feel very strongly about the upcoming free vote on capital punishment. The number of letters I have received both for and against retention of the death penalty is indicative of the intense emotional and indeed spiritual conflict which has stirred the people on this issue. The vast majority of correspondents, 95 per cent to be exact, have strongly urged retention of capital punishment for all persons convicted of premeditated murder.

It should be noted that the arguments are not based solely on a desire for revenge. Indeed, most persons are concerned about the ease with which chronic killers are returned to society. In addition, despite certain statistics which imply that the death penalty is not a deterrent, the majority of people are of the opinion that if the laws were enforced this would in fact be a deterrent to some potential killers.

You will note the importance of the phrase "if the laws were enforced". More than 50 per cent of the correspondents in favour of capital punishment strongly urge Members of Parliament to insist that the government carry out our laws to the letter. While there will always be need for a certain amount of leeway, there is little doubt in the minds of many people that there has been too much leeway and clemency; therefore, the government must be prepared to enforce the laws to protect Canadian citizens. Those persons and associations in favour of abolition should not be regarded as bleeding-hearts, because their ultimate goal is the same as that of retentionists, that is, to improve Canadian society. In addition, they have come to this decision after some thought and soul-searching.

One suggestion which appears to be the strongest and the weakest argument for abolition is that a man should not take another man's life in our civilization. The weakness in this statement is that man has not progressed much, if at all, since leaving the Neanderthal age.

We must look far and wide to safeguard humanity. Perhaps a letter I have just received from one of my constituents sums this up. It states that no matter how we may shrink from it, we must have the death penalty to deter cold-blooded, calculating murderers. Such killers are the type who fear for their own skins. The children who may be these killers' victims need our sympathy far more than the homicidal types. The letter I have referred to is from a woman.

The numerous reports and presentations regarding studies on the impact of capital murder on the number of murders leads to one conclusion, that temporary abolition of the death penalty in this and other countries has not led