

Capital Punishment

bringing out the fact that the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Unitarian Council, the Lutheran Church in America, the Quaker Society of Friends and the Mennonite Central Committee—all of these denominations which probably include the vast majority of those identified as organized religion in this country—oppose the death penalty.

This motion is not before us because of a concern about a moral issue that is being violated by this House in not bringing it forward. Indeed, it would seem that we are being appealed to by all the moral authorities not to raise this subject at this time. If it is not moral authority that is calling for this and if it is not that we are unconcerned, then we have to ask ourselves why the media also seems to regard this question as a rather strange one to raise. The hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth has already cited the litany of the names of the various major publications in this country, many of which are customarily prone to support his party, the Tory party.

● (2140)

Mr. Darling: Who are you kidding?

Mr. de Corneille: Many have done so but are themselves puzzled and are asking why this subject is being raised at this time. He has cited the names of these newspapers. As I have said, many are Tory newspapers. This question is not being raised because of any outcry on the part of the Canadian public. The motion put forward by the Conservatives has made it necessary for us to again debate the issue.

They have tried unsuccessfully since 1976 by introducing private members bills to have this matter debated again. Now the Conservatives are ready to use their valuable opposition time to debate this matter on an opposition day. That puzzles the media. Why would they use the time when there are concerns about inflation, the rate of interest, the international problems in the world, the grave threat of Soviet intervention in Poland, and the problems in the Middle East? We are debating this issue when there is no moral outcry. The media asks why this subject is being debated. I am at a loss myself.

Mr. Corbett: Sit down then.

Mr. de Corneille: More particularly, why should we debate this at this particular time. There has been no call from the public to bring back hanging. We have been monitoring the situation since the abolition of the death penalty.

We have been assessing the facts to see what the Canadian experience has been.

Mr. Siddon: What about the 30,000 signatures today?

Mr. de Corneille: The facts are simple and they are worth noting. Again, I have to ask why the Conservatives are asking for this particular debate at this particular time. Since the abolition of capital punishment in this country, there has not been an increase in murders. On the contrary, the incidence of murders has decreased. For the edification of those across the way, I think they should have the facts before them. I know one can distort statistics, but I think these are rather simple.

These are not figures that can be distorted easily. I do not think any hon. member could challenge that.

In 1975, the murder rate was 2.8 per 100,000 population. In 1976 and 1977, the rate decreased to 2.7.

An hon. Member: What about attempted murders?

Mr. de Corneille: In 1978 and 1979, the rate further decreased to 2.5 per 100,000 population. What new evidence or arguments have come to light to justify this debate?

First, there is no outcry on the part of moral authority, nor is the media calling for a debate. No increase has occurred in the rate of murders since capital punishment was eliminated. On the contrary, there has been a decrease in the number of capital murders. What is the motive for the opposition in calling this particular debate, if this is the case?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being 9:45 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every item necessary to dispose of the business of supply in accordance with Standing Order 58(9).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Clark) which was negated on the following division.

● (2150)

(Division No. 65)

YEAS

Messrs.

Andre	Crosby	Hamilton
Baker	(Halifax West)	(Qu'Appelle-Moose
(Nepean-Carleton)	Dantzer	Mountain)
Beatty	Darling	Hamilton
Blenkarn	Dinsdale	(Swift Current-Maple
Bradley	Domm	Creek)
Clark	Ellis	Hargrave
(Yellowhead)	Elzinga	Hawkes
Clarke	Epp	Hees
(Vancouver Quadra)	Fennell	Howie
Coates	Fraser	Huntington
Cook	Fretz	Jarvis
Cooper	Friesen	Jelinek
Corbett	Gamble	Kempling
Cossitt	Gass	Kilgour
Crombie	Greenaway	King
Crosbie	Gurbin	Korchinski
(St. John's West)	Halliday	Kushner