

retention offset those who were against, and there was a great middle area in favour of some form of capital punishment in at least a limited number of cases. I feel this is not being frank with the people of Canada.

If the Prime Minister, the Solicitor General and other members of this cabinet are abolitionists in fact, I suggest they should accept the defeat of this bill and introduce an abolitionist bill which they feel is in line, presumably, with their conscience and actions. I think it is unfair to talk abolition yet introduce a bill which appears to be retentionist. This is particularly true in view of the record since 1962, which shows a lack of serious intention to allow the preceding bill to be effective in the sense that there were executions.

In respect of the question of what people want, I think we should take note of the Gallup poll held fairly recently in Canada; that was in February of 1972. It showed that 63 per cent supported the restoration of the death penalty in Canada. This was broken down to indicate that in English-speaking Canada 58 per cent were of that feeling, while in French-speaking Canada 74 per cent were in favour. It is interesting to note that going back to 1968 the figures show that those in favour of retention of the death penalty amounted to only 53 per cent. There is obviously a growing tendency among people in Canada to favour the death penalty.

I suggest the Prime Minister and the Solicitor General, instead of taking an academic approach and catering to those who favour abolition, should trust the people. In many ways, the present government since the election of October 30 has shown mystification as to why it did not receive a bigger mandate. I suggest one reason is that it has forgotten to listen to and trust the people of this country.

Many hon. members have canvassed their constituencies to determine local feelings on the subject of the death penalty. In my riding, of the 5,203 who responded to the questionnaire, 89.4 per cent indicated they wanted the death penalty retained in some cases, while 10.6 per cent were in favour of abolition. This is not unique. The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) carried out a similar poll in which it was asked whether the death penalty should be restored to the statute books. He found that 87.2 per cent of the families responding were in favour. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) carried out another survey and found an overwhelming majority in favour of the restoration of capital punishment.

That hon. member's questionnaire asked whether capital punishment should be abolished. Forty-four per cent of those who responded strongly disagreed, 26 per cent indicated some disagreement and only 11 per cent agreed strongly it should be abolished. Surely these statistics mean something, and if we in this House ignore them I feel we are not giving proper representation to the constituents who elected us. Having regard to the world situation, contrary to the impression perhaps left by certain government spokesmen, the fact is that the death penalty is universally favoured throughout the world. This is borne out by the United Nations' report of February, 1973, to which I have referred.

Capital Punishment

The Prime Minister did touch on whether capital punishment is in fact a deterrent, although he did so very quickly: he said all of us have the figures, and he is satisfied it is not a deterrent to murder. I hope all members of the House take the opportunity to look at the statistics. I am surprised that the right hon. Prime Minister was able to satisfy himself, after looking at the figures, that capital punishment is not a deterrent. If those statistics prove anything at all, I suggest they prove exactly the reverse.

On page 6 of a Statistics Canada publication entitled "Murder Statistics, 1971" we find listed the number of murders reported to Statistics Canada for each of the years 1954 to 1971. It also gives the rate per 100,000 of population. In 1954 there were 125 murders reported, and in 1962 there were 217 reported. Between those years there was a relatively insignificant increase as far as rate is concerned. In 1954, Statistics Canada shows exactly one per 100,000, and in 1962 there was 1.4. In 1971 there were 425 murders, which was a rate of 2.2 per 100,000. Rather than showing this as an insignificant increase, I think it is fair to point out to the House and to the people of Canada that it is an increase of more than 100 per cent. It is an increase from one per 100,000 to 2.2 per 100,000.

Surely the suggestion that if it could be shown that capital punishment is a deterrent, some of those who are not satisfied would be in favour of capital punishment, is not relevant. The point is that statistics only show the number of crimes and the failure of capital punishment as a deterrent. Those statistics can never show how often capital punishment has deterred a potential murderer from committing a crime, or how often it has encouraged one to leave his gun behind. I suggest that is an important point to be borne in mind when considering the bill before us. I suggest that the question of whether capital punishment is or is not a deterrent is secondary to the main question.

• (2040)

Are we in this House prepared to accept that there is no crime, no evil so heinous that capital punishment need not be inflicted upon the person who commits it? To me that is the basic question before us. If you say yes, but only yes, then you are an abolitionist. Surely if you say no, then you are a retentionist and it is only the degree that has to be determined. If we suggest it is possibly not a deterrent to have the death penalty, that is an extremely weak argument because taken to extreme it would mean that we should drop all penalties. Should we drop penalties in respect of all crimes? I think the statistics offered by the academics would also show that in respect of crime generally there has been a substantial increase. If one accepts the argument that has been suggested in this House concerning capital punishment, that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime, perhaps we should give up on all forms of punishment.

Let me come to a specific matter which I find quite hard to reconcile. In his speech, the Prime Minister began with two premises. The first is his belief that wanton or unnecessary killing is evil. The second is the requirement for self-protection, be it individual or collective in the form of a society. He then stated that it is justifiable for society to use capital punishment as a means of self-