

### *Capital Punishment*

reinstatement with a considerable majority. As their representative I feel proud to be able to respond to their demands.

I have conducted two surveys on capital punishment in my constituency during the past two years. The first survey, which was done in April, 1985, revealed that 76 per cent supported the return of capital punishment, 18 per cent were opposed, and 6 per cent were undecided in the Winnipeg—St. James constituency. The last survey was completed several weeks ago. I might say that there is still the odd return coming in when mail is allowed to go through. The last survey was conducted in April, 1987. The results indicate that 73 per cent favour the return and reinstatement of capital punishment, 24 per cent are opposed, and 3 per cent are undecided. Basically, the majority of our area still wants the return of capital punishment to the justice system.

I intend to uphold the representation of my constituency and the voters' demands. To ignore the will of the people on this issue is to tell the majority of Canadians that their opinions do not count. I believe their opinions count, and I intend to make them count when I vote on this issue.

I also believe there is a serious imbalance in our justice system in favour of criminals. Let us consider the murderer. If arrested, he is not only informed of his rights and taken into police protection, but he is also given the counsel of a defence lawyer who protects his client's interest before a court comprised of a judge and a jury to ensure that everything is fair and proper. In addition, the defendant in the case also has the right of appeal to a higher court. Society makes a great effort to protect the rights of the accused.

Now let us consider the victim. A person, through no wish of his or her own, is arbitrarily deprived of the most basic human right—life, the right to live. There is no jury, no lawyer, no appeal; just the decision of the individual who set out to premeditate how to eliminate a life. The murderer's decision is singular and final. The penalty of capital punishment goes far in redressing the imbalance by imposing a penalty as final as the one of the murderer.

Our citizens are expecting this justice. They are taking the law into their own hands. During November and December, 1986 in Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta small store owners were arming themselves—and we saw what happened—against would-be thieves and potential killers.

In a matter of five weeks there were five attempted or successful armed robberies, two deaths had occurred, and three thieves were recovering from wounds. Are these citizens crying out for the right to be protected from the potential killer who seems to have no fear of the law or a serious penalty for his dastardly deeds?

As Members of the Parliament of Canada we cannot condone such behaviour. We have sworn to uphold the laws of the country and to make new laws. Surely we can return their confidence in our system of justice. If we cannot condone this

action, we should at least return their confidence in our system of justice.

● (1710)

The fundamental questions of capital punishment are, is it deserved and is it appropriate? I believe that capital punishment vindicates the moral standard that it is wrong to murder and that the murderer deserves to die for his crime. I believe the only moral justification for capital punishment is that it is deserved and it is a just penalty. Either it is or it is not. Capital punishment is necessary to protect society and social order and should be available as an option in sentencing. As the situation currently stands, we are not adequately protected. The killer who has been jailed for life has one option to prison, that is, escape.

As a former Minister of Corrections in the Province of Manitoba, I knew of the difficulties in our prisons and penal system. Those people who argue that a term of life imprisonment is an appropriate alternative to the death penalty should recognize what is happening in our penal system. The crime rate in our prisons across Canada has risen by some 400 per cent since the abolition of capital punishment in 1976. There is an average of some 11 murders every year in our penal system. What we are doing is transferring the problem into our penal system. In the environment existing within our institutions, the convicted murderer has nothing to lose if he kills again. Will a longer sentence really make a difference to someone already serving a life sentence? Do we really want the Clifford Olsons out on the street again? That is a question we must ask ourselves. Do we really want an individual like that walking around in society knowing what he had done to his 11 victims some years ago?

Those are my reasons for supporting capital punishment. I believe that we, as part of the parliamentary system, have to recognize that the reality of first degree murder is senseless and it is brutal. Where there is no question that an individual has committed the ultimate crime, give the jury the opportunity to decide whether capital punishment should be imposed on that individual so that we can protect society and bring reality back into our justice.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a brief question to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James (Mr. Minaker). In the course of his remarks he listed a number of types of murders which he believed warranted the use of the death penalty. Let me point out to him that all those types of murders occur in Great Britain. Not only that but Britain is faced very frequently with murders created by terrorists of various types. Yet, just a few years ago, the British House of Commons with a large majority of Conservative Members of Parliament in which the Prime Minister, no shrinking violet, is a strong supporter of capital punishment, voted by a substantial majority against a proposal to reintroduce capital punishment.