

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

and have had the facts of murders replayed, for want of a better word, in order that we may know all the details and decide whether the sentence of hanging should be commuted to life imprisonment or carried out. When one has been in this position, he realizes that those who commit capital murder are people with twisted and warped minds, minds completely different from those possessed by the normal human being. When you have listened for a number of years, as I did for six years as a member of cabinet, to the recounting of the facts of a great many capital murders, which are given to cabinet in considerable detail so they may make a proper decision on whether the death sentence should be carried out or commuted to life imprisonment, you become shocked and horrified at the kinds of crimes the people who commit capital murder are capable of carrying out. Such crimes are very often connected with sex. They are crimes against small children, young girls, old women, old men; people who are completely defenceless. When one hears the details of these crimes, he realizes that the minds of people capable of carrying out a crime of this kind are very different from those of normal people.

What is the alternative to the death penalty? It is, as we know, life imprisonment. What is life imprisonment? Does it mean putting the offender away from society for the rest of his or her natural life? The answer, of course, is no, because, with good behaviour, life imprisonment can mean as little as nine years in prison. Good behaviour in this case has nothing to do with a change of heart, a change of mind, or a change of approach in respect of the kind of crime for which the offender was committed to jail. Good behaviour in these cases simply means that you have kept out of trouble with the jail authorities, that you have behaved yourself and been a good convict, that you have kept your uniform clean, your shoes shined and have behaved yourself on parade and at other times. It has nothing to do with any change of attitude toward the crime which your abnormal and twisted mind led you to commit in the first place.

● (9:30 p.m.)

Today, when a criminal who has been sentenced to life imprisonment for capital murder is released after perhaps as little as nine years, he comes out completely unchanged, and is ready to commit another crime of a similar nature whenever once again the urge to do so seizes his twisted and warped mind, as it did in the first instance.

[Mr. Hees.]

To get away from theory and down to actual facts, I should like to encourage all hon. members to read today's issue of the Toronto daily *Star*. In the bottom left hand corner of the front page of that paper, you will find the following headline "Parkdale Gun Murder. Gentle, Friendly Tailor Meets A Violent Death". The article describes what happened in the following terms:

Morris Mayzel, who made a Parkdale tailor shop his life for over 20 years, met violent death there yesterday.

The short, 66-year-old man—whom neighbors recall as gentle and friendly—was gunned down in his Tip Top Tailor shop at 1530 Queen St. W. about 5:30 p.m.

He died, sprawled on his doorstep and choking on his own blood, as dazed neighboring storekeepers ran to their telephones for help.

Today dozens of Metro police continued a search for his killer which began at dusk last night.

Police, putting together details of the apparent robbery-murder, said there were apparently no witnesses to the rush-hour killing.

Robert Bamlett, homicide squad detective-sergeant, said Mayzel was apparently alone in his store when the assailant entered. What happened when the storekeeper was confronted by the assailant is not clear; the store's cashbox was closed and apparently undisturbed when detectives arrived.

Mayzel was shot three times through his chest and abdomen, but apparently tried to follow his attacker out of the store. A man believed to be fleeing the store jostled neighborhood youngsters, who gave a description to the police.

When passersby reached Mayzel, he was lying in the doorway of the small shop.

We can reconstruct the incident fairly well because it is similar to many of which we have heard in the past. A gunman decided, in cold blood, that he would rob the store, and that if he encountered any resistance, he would shoot and kill the storekeeper. It would appear to me that the storekeeper had the courage to resist this attempted robbery. The criminal carried out his intention, shot the storekeeper three times, and left him in a pool of blood. If the man who committed this murder is found, and we all hope he will be, I feel sure he will receive the death sentence, because this was a cold-blooded, premeditated crime.

The record for the past four years shows us that of the 23 or 27 capital murder convictions that have come before the cabinet, every one has been commuted to life imprisonment. These people were not confined away from society for the rest of their lives, to ensure that they would not commit such a crime again, but were sentenced to life imprisonment, which means that after nine or ten years, if their behaviour is good, they