

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

trar General and others in favour of the bill will agree that this is so, the argument really boils down to this. Is capital punishment an effective and necessary deterrent or are other deterrents equally effective? My view, which I hold strongly, is that capital punishment is necessary. It is the most effective deterrent to murder which exists and therefore for the protection of the general public it should remain part of our law. I shall therefore vote against the bill.

In the past great masses of statistics have been cited as to the relation between the number of murders and the existence or absence of capital punishment. These statistics formerly were used with great assurance by abolitionists who attempted to prove that capital punishment was not necessarily a deterrent to murder. Recently, I note, they do not place nearly the same reliance on those statistics. It has become clear that nothing one way or another can be proved from them. The Registrar General said as much in his speech a few minutes ago. Other abolitionists have also admitted that, and the Solicitor General when discussing the bill said, as found on page 4078 of *Hansard*:

I concede that I cannot number the occasions when the death penalty might have been a deterrent. Indeed, I do not claim that statistics are proof conclusive—

He goes on to say that in his view statistics are relevant. He used many statistics and examples from various countries to try to prove his contention that capital punishment is not necessarily a deterrent to murder. Summing up at the bottom of the page he said:

—these statistics show with remarkable consistency that the abolition of the death penalty did not lead to an increase in the rate of murder.

I take exception to that statement and I dispute its accuracy. One might take the little book on capital punishment and material relating to its purpose and value which was issued by the government in 1965 and select all kinds of examples to prove the case either for or against abolition. The example which carries most weight, to my mind, is the one which was used by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain). What has happened in the United Kingdom? It is two years since they abolished the death penalty. In that regard I wish to quote part of an editorial in the October 30 issue of the *Calgary Herald*. It puts the matter clearly and reads as follows:

Canadian parliamentarians should take careful note of the weight of public opinion in Britain which favors a return to capital punishment in that country.

[Mr. Harkness.]

There are lessons which should be learned from the British experience before the Canadian House votes for the second time in as many years on abolition of the death penalty in this country.

The record in Britain indicates that the murder rate and the incidence of violent crime have both risen since abolition.

Britain abolished capital punishment two years ago for a five year experimental period. There were 35 capital murders in Britain last year and 32 in 1965, compared with an average of just over 20 in the previous eight years when the death penalty was in effect.

That is an increase of 65 per cent and should give the abolitionists cause for thought. The editorial goes on to say:

Britain is universally regarded as one of the most civilized countries in the world, not given to the type of violence that typifies crime in many other countries. The fact that violent crimes have increased since abolition should make Canadian lawmakers stop and think before casting their votes in the forthcoming debate on following Britain's example by abolishing the death penalty for a five year trial period in Canada.

This example is particularly important to use because our traditions and our respect for the law are much the same as Britain's and justice in this country is administered very much as justice is administered in Britain. As the editorial says, Britain has the smallest incidence of violent crime and shows the greatest respect for law of any country in the world. For the murder rate to increase in Britain is a clear indication that the same thing might happen here if the death penalty is abolished, and I hope it will not be.

I will not quote many statistics. When the Solicitor General says that the balance of evidence shows that abolishing capital punishment does not lead to an increase in the murder rate, I do not think he can prove his case. I have cited the example of Britain. On page 89 of the little blue book on capital punishment which I referred to a few minutes ago the homicide rates for the New England states are shown to be the lowest in the United States. Again, those states have a stronger tradition of respect for the law than other parts of that country. In any event, we see that the murder rate for Maine, which has no capital punishment, from 1940 to the present time has consistently been higher than the rates for New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

• (5:30 p.m.)

The rate in Rhode Island, which also does not have the death penalty, is very slightly higher than the rates in these other states, all of which have the death penalty. These figures are not conclusive. I do not think they