

*Business of the House*

are all different beings with different approaches and different backgrounds we will certainly all assign different values to the same factors and consequently we will arrive at different totals and different balances when we weigh them one against the other.

Those in favour of retaining the death penalty have based their main argument almost completely on its effectiveness as a deterrent. This points up one of the ways in which I find the bill unsatisfactory because it implies that the death penalty is not a deterrent in cases of murder but is a deterrent with regard to treason. Let us put the deterrent of capital punishment in one scale labelled "for retention of the death penalty". Against it in the other scale we will have to put other deterrents, one of which has already been mentioned, life imprisonment. When we use the term "life imprisonment" I think most of us do not have in mind the definition as it is applied in the practice of our law at the present time. We realize that we can alter that definition to any period that we consider reasonable or necessary.

I am one of those who believe that the death penalty is the most effective deterrent there is and that it is more effective as a deterrent than life imprisonment. But against it in the other scale I must also put another factor and that is the hard fact that there have been cases where an innocent person has been hanged. I think that goes a long way to balancing up what advantage the death sentence may have as an extra deterrent over life imprisonment. But I must put against it still another factor and that is the fact that a rich man who can employ the best counsel and can take full advantage of the legal processes of the law and carry his appeal from one court to another has a much better chance of escaping the death penalty than a poor man under the same circumstances and without the same financial resources. In my mind these three factors in favour of abolition just about balance what extra weight the deterrent may have.

But there are other factors as well which we must take into consideration. These are mostly factors that we know nothing at all about. A child comes into this world. If the child has evil tendencies or weaknesses he has inherited them from his forebears. If he comes into the world without these tendencies, then he must have acquired them to some extent as a result of his environment. Who is responsible for his environment? Is not society as a whole? Are we not our brother's keeper? Can society condemn a man and then wash its hands like Pilate and say, "We have no responsibility

at all for his failure"? When society condemns an individual, does not society in some respects condemn itself also? If that is the case, how then can society exact the full penalty when society itself is not altogether blameless?

I believe that society does have a responsibility. I believe that if all these unknown factors could be understood each and every one of us would be inclined to say with Bunyan, "There but for the grace of God go I". So, Mr. Speaker, these additional factors have sufficient weight in my opinion to tip the scales in favour of abolition of the death penalty and that is why I say I support the bill on balance. I would not attempt to be dogmatic about this conclusion. I realize that I have a 50-50 chance of being wrong and that many other members with a different scale of values may very well use the same factors, total them up in the same way I have and sincerely and honestly arrive at an opposite conclusion.

But I believe it is our duty in a matter of this kind to be honest and put forward our best thinking on the subject, and that is what I have tried to do. I still have an open mind and if others can prove to me that I am wrong in my assessment I am still open to conviction.

**Mr. Campbell (Stormont):** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps the hon. member would prefer to begin his address on the resumption of this debate. Pursuant to the order made earlier this day by the house, this debate stands adjourned until Thursday next when it will appear as the first item on the order paper.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Chevrier:** May I ask the acting house leader what the business is for tomorrow and Monday?

**Mr. Brooks:** Tomorrow we will continue with the supplementary estimates which we have been considering. If and when we finish the supplementary estimates we will take the resolution in the name of the Minister of Public Works on housing and after that the resolution in the name of the Minister of Transport dealing with the railway grade crossing fund. On Monday and Tuesday we will have a supply motion and on Wednesday we will consider any business that is left over from Friday, that is, supplementary estimates and the resolutions I mentioned before. If these have been completed the other business will be indicated later.

At ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.