

### *Capital Punishment*

September gang for its actions, which led to two more murders. I will finish quoting from the article:

Most violent criminals have colleagues and friends who are also violent. Doubtless many ruthless men are presently considering their choice of victims to kidnap in order to force the release of some imprisoned murderer. One successful venture would trigger an epidemic.

Many thinking people throughout the world must have been startled when the U.S. Secretary of State, William P. Rogers, urged the Sudanese authorities to execute the murderers of Cleo A. Noel and George C. Moore. They knew that the American authorities could not have executed the assassins if the crime had been committed on American soil. To them this must have seemed imperialist hypocrisy, flavored with colonialism and racism—one law for the rich, the U.S.A.—another for the poor, the Sudan.

Whatever their motives, those who have succeeded in abolishing the death penalty in this country—

That remarks applies to this country also.

—have merely substituted the deaths of the innocent for the guilty.

I think that article is worthy of being included in the record and that is why I read it, Mr. Speaker. We can take this as the basis of a hypothetical case, and make a projection as to how an extension of the temporary ban would work in the future. We can suppose that a man such as Eper, to whom I referred, might kill a prison guard or two in making an escape and then shoot it out with the police to avoid being apprehended and returned to prison. He might kill one or more policemen, and in the end he might be given three or four or even five life sentences to serve. After a while it becomes ludicrous. Instead of dealing with crime, this bill will simply make a mockery of the law. And, Mr. Speaker, I cannot, nor can some other hon. members, be a party to anything that makes a mockery of the law. We already have a situation in which the only people who have any respect for the law or fear of retribution are those who obey the law.

It might be said by the total abolitionists that I have do not have any feeling for the sanctity of life. But nothing could be further from the truth. I have a deep-seated revulsion for violence and no one could have any more feeling for the finality of death than I have. However, unlike the abolitionists, perhaps, I reserve my deepest sympathy for the victims of violent criminals. My sympathies go first to those innocent, law-abiding Canadians who might be unfortunate enough to be in a bank when it is being robbed. My sympathies are for the policemen who are shot down in the course of their duties while protecting our lives and property from violent criminals. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned since the convict Eper escaped that he might kill someone as he tries to get automobiles and money, or that he might kill one or more policemen if he is cornered.

In my view, it is strange logic when someone casually accepts the deaths of criminals in a gun battle with police officers at the scene of a crime. Hardly anyone mourns their passing. But if there happens to be a survivor and he is convicted and sentenced to death, there is a hue and cry about the sanctity of his life. He cannot be put to death by the state because, it is said, legal executions are barbaric. Some people even excuse this attitude by saying that anyone who chooses the police as a career knows in advance that he might at some time be required to put his life on the line. They say it is one of the hazards of his

profession. I cannot excuse killers of policemen as lightly as that, Mr. Speaker, and I doubt if many people can accept this if they look deeply enough into their conscience.

I would not attempt to influence any of my colleagues in the way they will vote on this bill. It is much too serious a matter and can only be decided on the most personal basis. It is a question that defies an answer that would deal with criminals as harshly as they deal with their victims, but at the same time satisfy those who place the sanctity of the lives of murderers above the barbarity of the criminals' acts. However, although I would not attempt to influence them directly, I think it would be in order to suggest that every member of this House should think seriously about the way our statements and actions in this House will be viewed by the lawless elements in our society. I am sure that they are going to be heartened by comments to the effect that the sanctity of a murderer's life overrides the barbarity of a brutal, premeditated murder of an innocent victim.

There are hardened, vicious inmates in our prisons who would like very much to get out. Some of them will take the calculated risk involved in resorting to violence in order to gain their freedom. If they believe that the worst they can get is a prison sentence, then what have they to lose? The plain fact is that over the past year the violent criminal has been getting more attention and more consideration from the present government than has been given to his victims. Unless this attitude changes abruptly I am afraid the efforts of our police, our courts and our prison system in dealing with crime will be thwarted.

Sir, we have an opportunity right now, while we are debating whether or not we will pass the buck to another parliament, to take positive steps to deal with one of the most pressing issues of our time and of our civilization. We can decide now that we will not put off this opportunity to wage war on crime and on those who make crime their profession.

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that the government's handling of the test ban on capital punishment has created confusion in the minds of criminals and law-abiding citizens alike over the past five years. For one thing, we appear to take the same attitude toward the person who kills without intent or plan, and the criminal who kills in the course of following the profession of crime. When the government commutes the sentences of those specifically mentioned in a piece of legislation and accords them the same treatment as those who might be guilty of manslaughter, there is no way we can convince law-abiding citizens that their well-being is uppermost in our minds.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must say to this House that I cannot in all conscience accept the premise of this bill. It is not designed to correct the present tendency toward violence in our society. It will not further the ends of justice and certainly will not serve to deter anyone who decides on a life of crime. It will not deter people from taking the lives of policemen or prison guards, and it will not give anyone the impression that we in parliament are interested in erecting safeguards for the innocent victims of crime. In fact, Mr. Speaker, short of giving comfort to criminals and potential criminals, passage and implemen-

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]