

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

the conviction the daughter was found to be alive in San Francisco. That occurred in 1974. In 1934, there was the case of Louis Berrett and Clement Molway, identified by eight eyewitnesses as the men who had killed a theatre employee. Some Hon. Members say that we will keep capital punishment for only those cases which are clear. Surely a case with eight eyewitnesses must be as clear a case as one could ask for. Yet just before the final arguments at the trial, the actual killers confessed. The jury foreman in that 1934 case was later quoted as saying, "This trial has taught me one thing. Before it I was a firm believer in capital punishment. I'm not now".

In 1922, Maurice Mays, a black man, was executed for murdering a white woman. Four years later, a white woman confessed in a written statement that she had disguised herself as a black man to kill the woman with whom her husband was having an affair. That is the responsibility carried by Members of the House of Commons if we vote to put capital punishment back into effect. We carry the responsibility of putting to death not just those who might have been guilty but of wrongly putting to death people who were not guilty. That is a reality that is very important for us to keep in mind.

I would like to talk very briefly about the way I will vote in this debate. Before I was elected in 1984, a great many people asked me about my stand on capital punishment. I told them that if the question came up in a new House of Commons, I would vote against the restoration of the death penalty. That was one promise I made at that time to my constituents. I also promised that in any debate that did take place, I would report the feedback I had heard from my constituents and I am quite pleased and willing to do that.

We sent to the households of Essex—Windsor a Household-er in which, as there often is, there were questions permitting my constituents to write back telling us if they agree or disagree with the stands I take. So we asked them if they disagreed with my stand on capital punishment. Some 49 per cent of those who replied said they did. Some 46 per cent agreed. Some 5 per cent were undecided. It is quite clear that in my constituency a split exists, with a small majority who want to see the death penalty restored. However, I think that is not the issue. The issue is that we were elected to make an informed choice based on a degree of reading, listening, and consultation which the average citizen, I am certain, has not had an opportunity to devote to this question.

● (1600)

There are two things which have to be stressed in that informed choice. The first part has to be to recognize the concern across this country over the increase in violent crime even though that has not been evident in homicide statistics themselves. We have to do something serious in response to that concern. For example, our probation system is grossly underfunded and undersupported. I have friends working in that system and they are simply unable to carry with any kind of effectiveness the case-load they are forced to carry. We need to have a parole system with sufficient resources to see to it

that those who leave prison are given a serious opportunity to make the transition to society.

We have to deal also with sentencing and with our penal institutions. As the Hon. Member who spoke previously said, far too often our penal institutions become universities of crime. They are not rehabilitating people. We have to work at that. We have to recognize it is not just the responsibility of Members of Parliament. It is not just the responsibility of our police. It is the responsibility of communities right across this country through institutions like Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers to try and do something about the development of crime. It cannot be done from the top, it has to be done from the ground up in our communities.

Although those things are important in considering our vote on this issue, far, far more important, overwhelmingly important, so much so that it has to dominate the thinking of everyone who makes a choice on this issue, has to be reverence for human life. Obviously capital punishment subverts that reverence. You cannot have a society where both respect for human life and capital punishment exist. Capital punishment in its very essence undercuts that respect for life which lies at the heart of a civilized society. That is why I will be very proud when the day actually comes to stand and vote against capital punishment. That is a commitment I believe in not just for myself but for my children and all those I love. It is a commitment I hope will be shared on that day by a majority of this House of Commons.

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PRIVILEGE**CANADA-U.S. TRADE NEGOTIATIONS—ALLEGED
CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS—RULING OF MR. SPEAKER**

Mr. Speaker: I want to say to Hon. Members and the watching and listening public that it is not normal practice for the Speaker to interrupt this important debate, especially after hearing those speeches which expressed with great emphasis some sincerely held views. I ask the indulgence of the House to interrupt at this time to return to the matter of the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), the Hon. Leader of the NDP.

In the interests of ensuring that all Hon. Members and the public know exactly what this is about, I am going to read into my reasons the letter I received from the Hon. Member for Oshawa because I think it puts very, very succinctly the concern expressed by the Hon. Member as well as the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray). This is what the Hon. Member for Oshawa wrote to the Speaker:

● (1610)

The Question of Privilege arises from the complete contradiction between what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade said in the House on June 17, 1987, about the Canada-U.S. Automotive Agreement not being a matter for discussion with the representatives of the U.S. government