

It is false sentimentality to argue that the death penalty should be abolished because of the abstract possibility that an innocent person might be executed.

But the main point is this. If government functioned only where the possibility of error did not exist, then government would not function at all. I am prepared to accept that risk, especially when I weigh it against the sure knowledge that some murderers murder again.

The other side of this innocent person argument is the repeat killer situation. While we know of no cases in this country where an innocent person has been executed, we know for certain that there are numerous cases wherein convicted murderers have, upon release or while on parole, murdered again. Human life deserves special protection. One of the best ways to guarantee that protection is to ensure that convicted murderers do not murder again. It can be argued that only the death penalty will accomplish this end.

Another point put forward by abolitionists is that capital punishment is not a deterrent. Obviously, many statistics have been put forward by both sides, and they are viewed as conclusive or insufficient, depending on the viewpoint of the presenter or the viewer. How could one ever measure the numbers of those in our society who have contemplated taking someone else's life for whatever reason? Some hopefully discard the idea as a result of realizing its repugnancy. Nevertheless, there must still be some in our society who are deterred by the consequences of imprisonment. I suggest there are still others who do that dreadful act but who, were they to face the ultimate penalty of death, might not.

Common sense tells me that there is an incremental group who are deterred. We are not here talking about a crime of passion done on the sudden, under provocation, or where the person is mentally imbalanced or is swayed by alcohol or drugs. Those are circumstances, of course, which result in a lesser offence. We are talking about a considered, deliberate, conscious act. I believe the penalties prescribed in the Criminal Code concerning, say, impaired driving or theft, do act as deterrents. I likewise believe that the penalty of execution is a deterrent for some.

Statistics can be paraded out *ad nauseam*. But the deterrence issue boils down to a personal belief. Either you believe in your heart or in your guts that capital punishment is a deterrent or you do not. My sense tells me that it is, that it has to be deterrent to some would-be murderers.

If we could assume that everyone committing murder were of unsound mind and lacked the required intent, then our decision would be easy. But despite all the rules of law providing defences, the mitigating circumstances of alcohol, drugs, provocation and so on, there are still those who, after every safeguard provided by our system of justice, are found guilty beyond any reasonable doubt, by a jury, of intentionally taking the life of another person. Some of those murderers may be worthy of mercy with a provision of imprisonment. But I submit that there are some acts of murder, some acts toward civilized society that must carry with them the maximum

Capital Punishment

penalty. These may be situations of mass murder, hijacking, terrorism, air piracy, or hired killing. These must be situations of cold-blooded, premeditated murder proven beyond any reasonable doubt in the absence of any extenuating circumstances. Where there are no redeeming circumstances at all, I believe the state should make provision for the death penalty.

Surely, the circumstances of a Clifford Olson, who murdered 11 young people, the Air India bombers who cost over 300 lives, or the Hindawi human bomb case in England, had it been successful, are crimes so dastardly and so inhuman as to be deserving of the ultimate penalty. I believe that no system of justice is complete unless it contains the ultimate penalty for the ultimate crime. The failure to provide capital punishment for premeditated murder causes sentencing for all other crimes to be reduced. This in turn leads to diminished respect for the law, a lack of respect which must be evident to all Canadians.

In conclusion, this is clearly an issue on which there are significant numbers of thoughtful and deeply moral people who disagree fundamentally with each other, who disagree as to the means to achieve a less violent society, a society in which law-abiding Canadians can feel secure. At my nomination in 1983, and in the campaign of 1984, I pledged to support the reinstatement of capital punishment and the reform of the parole system. After hearing and earnestly considering the submissions, the expressions of deeply-held belief put to me by constituents and others on both sides of this issue, I remain convinced that our society provides the accused murderer with every safeguard that he has denied his victim. Should that accused be proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt, then I believe the state should provide the death penalty as a sentencing option.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Oostrom).

Mr. Oostrom: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson) so eloquently expressed the opinion of the majority of Canadians, including myself, and the majority of constituents of Willowdale who support a death penalty for premeditated murder. I may not be able to speak on this important topic at this stage of the debate due to time constraints. However, I would like to ask the Hon. Member why there are so many—I believe he said 123—countries in the world which still have the death penalty enforced by law. I would like to know more about that specific aspect.

• (11:50)

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Sure, all of those great shiny examples of public morality, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan—

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) is busily quoting a number of socialist countries which retain the death penalty. I am not sure what his point is.