

*Criminal Code*

By all means let us hope that the committee to be appointed by this resolution will consider this subject from the most enlightened and civilized point of view.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us remember that there would be no death penalty if there were no murders. The death penalty is a terrible thing, and so is murder, an act by an individual who has defied the laws of society and not merely deprived some innocent individual of life but perhaps for the long years ahead will have brought tragedy and despair and the denial of the ordinary decencies of life to the wife and the children of one who has been shot down in cold blood by thugs who have armed themselves, perhaps not with the idea of murder but reckless as to what the results will be.

Yes, by all means let us examine this in a most civilized way. It may be that with the advancement of society some better method will be found but, Mr. Speaker, let any approach to this subject have first and foremost in the minds of those considering it the fact that what we are trying to do today is place it within the power of our courts to prevent murder by the example of the punishment that is inflicted. I personally do not believe the statement that the fear of death is not a deterrent. I personally do not believe that some young man, conscious of the fact that death would be the result of his reckless use of weapons, would not think twice of taking that weapon on some adventure that might result in death and in his own punishment for a capital offence. It is contrary to everything we know in human nature to think that anyone looking at that pistol or knife and taking it in his hand would do so without some thought of what the penalty will be if the adventure in which he is about to engage should result in death and a subsequent conviction for murder.

We have had a number of rather dramatic examples in this country of the kind of thing that should be in the minds of the members of the committee—and which I hope will be in the minds of the majority of the members of that committee—in making their recommendations back to this house. Already the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) referred to that almost unbelievable multiple murder when a time bomb was placed in a passenger aircraft flying from the city of Quebec to Sept Îles. An almost unbelievable murder it was. To murder his own wife a man followed a course which meant death to many innocent human beings. Those 21 people who died left behind widows and children who for long years to come will have reason to remember that horror.

[Mr. Drew.]

Just think of what happened only a few days ago in St. Michael's hospital in Toronto, when a brilliant young girl was murdered in a laboratory of that great hospital. Certainly let us remember that if the man or woman who committed that murder is apprehended the courts will be dealing with a human being; but remember also that the young woman who was murdered was a human being performing a humane task of great advantage and of great importance to many people in that hospital. Think of the bank manager in the province of Quebec who before Christmas was shot down by young men who perhaps did not contemplate murder, but having guns in their hands used those weapons when the bank manager resisted the theft they were trying to carry out.

From one end of this country to the other reports come to us of crimes of violence against decent, simple human beings whose lives are of immense importance to other decent human beings. The purpose of parliament and the purpose of the committee which will make its recommendations to parliament should be to do everything within the judgment of sensible men and women to discourage in every way possible that type of horror which affects such a wide area of our society when it occurs.

I am not laying down any dogmatic opinion in regard to the death penalty, but I do say that if there is going to be a balanced consideration of the humanities, let that consideration rest on the innocent people who are being shot down or knifed or otherwise destroyed. Let us think in terms of how we can best prevent that by example, if that can be done in any way.

There have been strangely conflicting arguments and certain statements which I do not think should pass without notice. I heard, as did other hon. members, the statement that it is a terrible thing to think of people engaging in the gruesome pleasure of taking social revenge. No one is contemplating the gruesome pleasure of social revenge. What we are considering is every sensible step that may be taken to end the gruesome horror of cold-blooded murder.

There have been some conflicting arguments presented. I do not question for one moment the good faith of those advancing the arguments, but I suggest that they be reviewed by those who have put them forward. On the one hand we were told that the thought of life imprisonment was even more terrifying than the death penalty. We had scarcely been told that when all the horrors of the contemplation of the death penalty