

Amendments Respecting Death Sentence

abolished, it should be so, and for all practical purposes, it is abolished—in accordance with the present section 202(a), should necessarily be sentenced to life imprisonment. I also feel that there should not be any commutation. In my opinion, it is essential to convince the people that there is a justice and that they are secure and protected.

There are too many escapes from our penitentiaries. If the population is led to believe that those who have the right to kill can eventually be released after ten or fifteen years, we contribute to lessen that feeling of security and, from a social and collective point of view, this is disastrous and detrimental. That is why I believe that every individual convicted of premeditated murder should be imprisoned for life.

May I be allowed as third—

• (3:40 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Scott (Danforth): Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Choquette: Yes.

Mr. Scott (Danforth): I am very interested in his thoughtful speech. He has mentioned the need for a murderer to hang in the case of a premeditated murder. I wonder whether in his research he has come across a case where a person who deliberately premeditated a murder had in his mind the thought of arrest and conviction and therefore the deterrent value of hanging.

[Translation]

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Speaker it is in fact an interesting question, but I think this is all a matter of surmise. There is no unshakeable proof. The hon. member knows very well—his interest in this question is very well known—that statistics themselves prove nothing; it is admitted that nothing can be proved with statistics. The only thing there is, I feel, is intuitive evidence and this is often stronger than a legal proof.

Many women have unfaithful husbands but will never be able to prove it but they know it intuitively. In this case, it cannot be proved legally but by intuition, it is known. Humanly speaking, it is obvious. I see that some members have a really distraught look when I speak like this—do not worry, I shall not betray any secret.

Some hon. Members: Ha, ha.

[Mr. Choquette.]

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Speaker, this is what I mean.

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): Explain.

Mr. Choquette: The hon. member for Charlevoix wants me to quote examples. I have too much consideration for him; far be it from me to compromise—

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I did not understand very well. Could the hon. member say that again?

Mr. Choquette: The hon. member asks me to quote examples. I answer him that I have too much consideration for him and far be it from me to compromise him.

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am fully aware that the hon. member is not alluding to me personally, but I must tell him that by quoting examples, he is in no danger whatsoever, because being a bachelor, he can do what he likes.

Mr. Choquette: Thank you. I would even say that on occasion I have eyed the wife of the hon. member for Charlevoix, who is most charming and whom I know as a faithful spouse.

Mr. Speaker, to return to a living subject rather than a mortal one, I should like to point out the following: should such a bill be accepted, it would mean that the abolition of the death penalty had been ratified legally. Everyone knows that. Now, I feel that if we want to go that far, an information campaign is the first requisite to give more security, that is a greater sense of security. It is important for the people to feel protected, to feel secure.

Secondly, I would say that, to strengthen this feeling of security, we ought also to make of life imprisonment a mandatory, non-commutative form of punishment. This would be inflicted on anyone convicted of wilful murder, if it should be found actually desirable to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary homicide, between wilful and unintentional murder. As the former is much more serious than the latter, a more severe form of punishment is called for.

Moreover—and this is the most important point I wanted to make in my remarks this afternoon—I feel that it is high time a compensation system was introduced in this country in behalf of the criminals' victims. Criminals are always present in our minds and we always deem it sadder and more horrible when the criminal is being led to a