

Santa Claus murder. He was talking about one kind of murder—done by the action of fools. Is he going to say to this house that we were wrong when we decided not to condemn a man to death for being a fool? Is he going to say that we should now retract that decision and say that anyone who does something so completely ridiculous and outside of human behaviour, something that is obviously the act of a mad man, should die? Hitler had a simple way of getting rid of people who were insane.

Let us go a little further. Is my friend the honourable Senator Beaubien suggesting for a moment we should say that the criminally insane should be destroyed? If he says that, then who shall decide who is criminally insane and who is merely criminal? I am sorry that the honourable Senator Beaubien is leaving and does not want to listen to this—because it might do him some good. In every case involving capital murder where the cabinet has exercised its prerogative and commuted the sentence of death to one of life imprisonment, the decision was not made by “bleeding hearts”, as Senator Beaubien put it, but by people acting on the recommendations of psychiatrists who said that the condemned men were not responsible for their actions.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: May I ask a question, before I walk out on you, like my honourable friend. Are all criminals insane? If we are going to believe you, it seems that at least the murderers are.

Hon. Mr. Prowse: There are times when I think that it is not only criminals who are insane.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: That is a smart alec answer.

Hon. Mr. Prowse: To answer your question, yes.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: Well, that is fine.

Hon. Mr. Prowse: I would say that any man who can murder another human being is an insane man. There was a debate on this years ago, and I do not propose to embark on it again.

I do not know how good a life everyone here has lived, but I can tell you that the police generally believe that any person who reaches the later years of life, or the age when he is ready to retire from the Senate, without getting a criminal record is not of necessity a completely honest, law-abiding citizen, but one who has lived a life of undetected crime.

Hon. Mr. Croll: You should not have added that.

Hon. Mr. Langlois: What about the House of Commons?

Hon. Mr. Prowse: They did not get caught. It is true I spent two hours in an iron cage in a little jail at Redpass in 1936, when they took us off the freights and said, “You cannot go west; you have got to go east.” They thought we were going to Vancouver to get on relief, when all we wanted to do was go out and look at the boats. We were Prairie boys. If that confession does not worry you I can probably get a better one, but it will do for now.

Those of us who have lived lives of undetected crime—those who have the right to walk across the border, and

[Hon. Mr. Prowse.]

who, when applying for a bond or a job, have the right to answer no to the question, “Have you ever been convicted?”—cannot possibly understand the penalty that is imposed on a man who, when faced with the same question and imbued with a sense of responsibility to be honest, must answer yes. So he stole a car when he was a kid. Perhaps your father gave you a car, provided you with “wheels”, but not one of you ever surrendered to the desire to get yourself some wheels from some unguarded place and not put them back. It is only those who do not put the wheels back who may be penalized for a lifetime.

Honourable senators, the law which my friend is talking about recognizes that men are not gods, that much as we might like to walk on clouds, we do not, that most of us walk something less than a perfect course through life.

Where a man has walked something less than a perfect course and has been caught and penalized by the law—particularly if this happened when he was young—is he forever to walk in shame and shadow; is he to be forever denied the right to walk upright like a man? Can we not put into our law the ability to forgive a man for human weakness? Can we not put into our law the ability to show a little mercy and forgiveness? Must we besmirch a man so as to prevent his whole life from being useful because of a momentary youthful indiscretion?

This is what my friend was talking about, and this is what my friend on the other side of the house completely misunderstood.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: I am glad you explained it.

Hon. Mr. Hastings: Honourable senators—

The Hon. the Speaker: Does the honourable Senator Hastings wish to close the debate?

Hon. Mr. Croll: Does the honourable senator wish to close the debate now? I am prepared to have the question put now, because I am in favour of the motion.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Thompson, debate adjourned.

CYPRUS

UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATION— QUESTIONS

On the Question Period:

Hon. Paul Desruisseaux: Honourable senators, I should like to have the indulgence of the Senate in order to put certain questions to the Leader of the Government concerning the activities of our Canadian forces in Cyprus and their role in the United Nations peace-keeping operation there. I should like to place before the Senate, verbally, the following questions:

1. Are Canadian forces still participating in the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Cyprus?
2. If so, what is the total number of Canadian military personnel engaged in this operation?