

MINIMUM SENTENCES AND FALSE REPORTS

Mr. Chairman, as you and the members of this committee know, I am by training and experience a police officer and police administrator rather than a jurist or penalogist. In my statement to the House Committee on the District of Columbia, regarding H.R. 1893, the so-called four-time loser bill, I stated that I thought legislation which would apply possible irrevocable life imprisonment to the vast selection of criminal offenses included in the felony classification might not be in the best interests of the District.

I stated to the House committee and will repeat to this committee that, in general, the District Code authorizes additional penalties for repeaters.

But in the Police Department, in our interviewing of criminals and in our observations of repeaters, we have found that among criminals the thought seems to prevail, with some possible merit, that the criminal gets a better break in the District of Columbia than he does elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN. That seems to be a point on which the U.S. attorney disagrees with you.

Chief MURRAY. Yes, I know he does.

The CHAIRMAN. If I understood his testimony correct, and I think I did, the table which he submitted does not seem to bear this out.

I do not know whether this is right or wrong.

Chief MURRAY. Could I depart from the statement a moment?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, of course.

Chief MURRAY. We had a case right here in the District of Columbia, which I thought was an atrocious crime, just a few months ago where a man had been released from prison in Virginia.

He stopped off here in Washington and he held up two young ladies at the point of a gun. They had just come from a theater. He forced them into a car and drove around town, out in the counties, and back in here, for that 3 hours.

He raped one of the victims, and tied them up and went on.

First we had a police identification from the victims from a 7-year-old photograph that was in our gallery.

The next day the man was arrested in Philadelphia, where he had attempted to hold up two candy stores. He told the police in Philadelphia that he had shot and killed a woman and thrown her body into the river here in Washington and, in the meantime, we got the victims and detectives and sent them over to Philadelphia where they identified the man, and he told substantially the same story that the complainants had told about the crime, but he stated that the reason that he had told them the story about killing a woman and throwing her body into the river was he thought that he would get off easier here in Washington than he would in Philadelphia, but he is being held in Philadelphia and will later come here to be tried.

There are many other—

The CHAIRMAN. Is that a common experience?

Chief MURRAY. Well, yes; sir. I do not have it with me, but I would like to put into the record or furnish for the record the penalties for the offense of armed robbery in nearby Virginia and the State of Maryland.