I!Sa to the NEWS

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SPECK AND EARLY PAROLE

A recent resolution introduced into the Illinois Legislature dramatically illustrates the injustice of failing to impose the death penalty for heinous crimes.

In Chicago on the night of July 14, 1966, a vicious criminal named Richard Speck systematically and sadistically stabbed and strangled eight student nurses. He was positively identified by the ninth nurse who escap d the same fate by hiding under a bed. Speck was convicted and sentenced to death, but he was spared his just punishment by the U.S. Supreme Court which magnanimously created a new technicality that a jury cannot exclude persons who oppose capital punishment. In other words, according to the Supreme Court, Speck had a constitutional right to have his jury include persons who opposed the then-existing laws on capital crimes.

Although Richard Speck is theoretically serving a 400 to 1,200 year sentence, **under** Illinois law his application for parole comes up this September. Many Illinois legislators deem it advisable to lock the barn door before the horse is stolen and are supporting a resolution opposing his parole.

Richard Speck's case has received so much publicity that it is unlikely he would be paroled anyway. But there is something wrong with a system that makes it doubtful enough that the Legislature feels compelled to act. Many other vicious criminals receive early parole without publicity.

One of the tragic effects of the U.S. Supreme Court ban on the death penalty is the increased number of rapists and robbers who

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murder their victims in order to eliminate witnesses. In Illinois, murderers with good prison behaviour can get a parole in about eleven years. The minimum sentence for rape or armed robbery is four years. Therefore, if the rapist or robber kills his victim and is caught, he risks only an additional seven years on his sentence. However, if the rapist or robber kills his:victim, he thereby eliminates the witness and makes it probable that the criminal will not be convicted at all.

A University of Chicago economist who examined data for tbe years 1933 to 1939 concluded that every execution prevents 17 murders. If his conclusion is valid, it gives the lie to those who claim they oppose the death penalty because of their great concern for the tak- ing of human life.The grim fact is that thousands of innocent people have paid with their lives because of the Supreme Court decis ion that spares murderers and, after a few years, lets them return to society and prowl the streets looking for more victims.

The FourthAmendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of all Americans "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects." The U.S. Supreme Court infringed that constitutional right four years ago when it forbade the death penalty, thereby making de praved murderers, -torturers and rapists eligible for parole after only about eleven years.

The Supreme Court Justices, who themselves have plenty of security protection and chauffeur-driven automobiles,JBX• tH:JllK)OOD!mcn:e:nba acec **xxlxXHmt!?ffl JS'{JDl!Dt$1lDillXHXX** are simply out of touch with the dangers of urban living. The Supreme Court is right now recon sidering its decision on the death penalty, and law-abiding citizens are hoping the Justices will correct their tragic mistake.

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