

Newsletter responses

Electims - Canada -
Mississauga

Many demand return of the death penalty

By MIKE SOLOMON

Thousands of Mississaugans want to bring back the death penalty for killers convicted of premeditated murder.

Of about 5,000 replies to a questionnaire sent out by Progressive Conservative federal candidate Don Blenkarn, 4,200 are demanding the return of the rope. Capital punishment was abolished in Canada in 1976.

Blenkarn, who told The Mississauga News he'd sent out about 30,000 questionnaires to "test the waters of public opinion on the issue", says replies are still pouring into his office.

Blenkarn said 84 per cent of the respondents favor the return of the death penalty for those who commit premeditated murder, and also support a national referendum on the issue.

Blenkarn, too, agrees with the return of the death penalty in cases of premeditated murder, he said in an interview last week.

"My personal opinion is that there should be a death sentence of some sort as the maximum penalty for a premeditated, heinous crime like murder."

The report on the death



DON BLENKARN

... return death penalty

penalty question is contained in an issue of In Touch, a Blenkarn campaign publication which seeks public opinion on politically sensitive issues.

It was circulated only in the Mississauga South federal riding, which takes in all the city south of the Queen Elizabeth Way.

Blenkarn said the respondents "came to these conclusions after being given the opportunity to weigh both sides of the argument" presented in the publication.

"I think it's high time we listened to the people and gave them what they want," Blenkarn said. "If elected in the next federal election, I intend to fight for what the

people want — a referendum to return the death penalty."

He said his questionnaire shows the "overwhelming majority of South Mississaugans obviously want that.

"To suggest that the conscience of a particular MP is more valid than the good sense of the voters is the height of audacity; especially on issues like the death penalty, on which the ordinary person can make better decisions than the most learned," Blenkarn said. Mississauga MP Tony Abbott voted for the abolition of the death penalty.

Opinions of respondents to other issues in the questionnaire were about evenly dispersed, he said.

Those issues included the age of consent for homosexual activity, abortion, mercy killing, the killing of baby seals for fur and meat and the "de-criminalization" of the possession of marijuana.

"The only question on which the people clearly wish a referendum is capital punishment," Blenkarn said.

The same 84 per cent who agreed with the referendum also said they supported the death penalty return.