

Capital Punishment

assault a mother than a policeman. Then, capital punishment must be reinstated when there is deliberate, well proven murder. If it is not, let us give the accused the benefit of the doubt, as I said earlier.

I could quote a letter from Sudbury, Ontario. It even has references to articles from the *Globe and Mail* and to the Bible itself in support of the re-establishment of capital punishment. I have another letter dealing more harshly with our work in the House. It states the following:

[English]

It is so simple. Yet our idiot parliamentarians—

[Translation]

That's us!

[English]

—are unwilling or totally incapable of following the police chiefs of Canada and their wise advice. The citizens of Canada want restorations of severe penalties if we are to combat—

all the ills in our society and those people who are trying—
—to undermine our youth with drugs and crime.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I could have brought in a complete file of documents to prove how strongly Canadians favour the re-establishment of capital punishment. I shall now quote a letter from Victoria, British Columbia:

[English]

As a citizen of Canada, I am writing in regard to the matter of capital punishment, shortly to come up for review in parliament.

[Translation]

This is what we are reviewing right now.

[English]

I am a believer of the Lord Jesus Christ; we thank God for the favourable government in this country, and pray constantly that those in authority may be helped to do what is right.

I feel strongly that capital punishment should be reinstated fully in Canada—because it is a morally right principle, set up by God and supported in the scriptures, which are the inspired word of God. In Romans chapter 13, it says: "Rulers are not a terror to a good work, but to an evil one . . . if thou practisest evil, fear; for it bears not the sword in vain; for it is God's minister, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil". Genesis, chapter 9, verse 6, says: "Whoso sheds Man's blood, by Man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God, He hath made him".

I trust that you will find these few sentences helpful in arriving at a right judgment as to this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Sam Burrowes

[Translation]

B-U-R-R-O-W-E-S, from Victoria, B.C.

I have here another letter from Winnipeg, another from Niagara, one from Toronto, asking for the reinstatement of capital punishment.

Mr. Speaker, we have countless examples such as those and I say that if there were a referendum in Canada, 85 or 90 per cent of the electors would say: Reinstate capital punishment but as it was before. I say so to present miscarriages of justice, but capital punishment must be reinstated in order to prevent more and more filthy crimes from being committed in the future.

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

I gave a while ago examples of a falsified justice, under which the gangster is almost more important than society, and I am always asking myself the following question: Should we pass laws to protect society against gangsters or gangsters against society? That is what we should ask ourselves. If we wish to protect gangsters, let us follow the course we have already taken. But if we wish to protect the life of our children, of our society, of our social classes, of our workers, of our farmers, of our aged people who are being bound hand and foot at every turn in the Montreal-Trois-Rivières area by scoundrels who steal \$200 or \$300 from them, we must take the necessary measures. Once gangsters are denounced, they are prosecuted; but we do not have sufficient evidence. Let them commit another crime tomorrow night, as they have thrown off the mask. When they are finally recaptured, we tell them: We let you out on bail! Get back on the street. If you did not get enough last night, try to mug two more persons tonight. Gangsters knock out or kill car or taxi drivers, for instance, to steal \$30 or \$40 from them. If those people have a heart I really wonder where our supposedly well organized society is leading us. I realize that capital punishment will not eliminate all criminals, and everybody knows it. But if there were at least that sword of Damocles to deter those who could be tempted to commit murder I believe that justice across Canada would be significantly improved.

In any event, the evidence that we receive as well as my attitude and that of my colleagues are not likely to hinder the overall administration of justice in Canada far from it. We want a more reasonable justice, a justice that respects and protects society. I think that the reinstatement of capital punishment would tend to reduce the number of crimes across Canada. I think we have had enough of the abuses observed since the abolition of capital punishment five years ago. It is time to reinstate it, not only to punish or seek revenge against criminals but also for the ultimate purpose of protecting society.

● (1550)

[English]

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, the current debate on capital punishment has been before parliament and the country for several months. From that, it is obvious the issue is not clearcut and that the decision as to whether it should be retained is not an easy one to reach. This bill does not really ask us to make a decision on that point. The bill neither retains capital punishment nor abolishes it, or, conversely, it both retains and abolishes it. It is a bill which negates the arguments in favour of capital punishment as well as those against it, and leaves everyone frustrated with a non-decision. I suppose one might say the situation is rather typical of the present government and its method of carrying out the mandate given by the people of Canada. It is obvious that the present government is not willing to make decisions on important matters such as this, and it is obvious that it is not willing to live up to the responsibility of enforcing the law as it now stands and has stood over the past five years.

I have very grave doubts as to whether there is any intention on the part of the government to enforce the law which will follow should this bill pass. Combining the