

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

almost scandalous in certain cases, the minister should rise and say: We withdraw this bill and ask simply: Are you for or against capital punishment? At least, we would have contributed to educate the public. Why waste four or five days time? Why? Mr. Speaker, I spoke a while ago of the speech made by the hon. member for Lotbinière, and I was forgetting to mention it. Has not moral pressure been practised on some hon. members who are now in favour of capital punishment but who, in conversation in the lobbies or in the offices, gathered that it might be wiser to change their opinion this year?

Yes, the government is in a tight spot. If the favours of the government are to be preserved, those at the helm of the government must not be displeased. Of course, it is a very human line of thought, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I am making a rash judgment in referring to this. Again I say that it is unworthy of respectable men, for whom I have respect, who are today at the helm of the government in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, first things first: Let us begin by educating the public, by thoroughly amending our penal system, by educating our judges, by making sure that the law is the same for the poor as well as for the rich. If we want to prove our respect for human life, let us begin by saving the lives wasted and sacrificed by the thousands, by the tens of thousands, for stupid wars, or, at least, by raising our voices in eloquent protest to awaken the world's slumbering conscience; in this fashion, we shall have served the community and those who claim that the public demands the death penalty.

Before resuming my seat, I should like to refer to the situation in Great Britain; to this effect, I quote from the November 7 issue of the *Ottawa Citizen*, an article headlined:

● (5:10 p.m.)

[English]

Bring back noose, Britons cry.

[Translation]

It reads as follows:

[English]

Britain's five year experiment—

[Translation]

They, too wanted a five year period of trial.

[English]

Britain's five year experiment with the complete abolition of capital punishment is two years old

[Mr. Mongrain.]

on Wednesday and already a petition to bring back hanging is gathering 5,000 signatures a week...

Home Secretary Roy Jenkins—Britain's minister of justice and police—disputes the statistical connection. But estimates made by Jenkins' own ministry shows 35 "capital murders" last year and 32 the year before—

That compares with an average of 20 a year before Britain abolished capital punishment.

[Translation]

And a little further, it is said:

[English]

While the Commons voted 355 to 170 to abolish the death penalty, public opinion polls showed 70 per cent of the electorate opposed the abolition—

[Translation]

I think that is the general feeling here, in Canada. In my opinion, this government has no right to ignore the general feeling of the people of Canada; it has no right especially to introduce a compromise bill, a subterfuge bill to mislead any hon. member who, in accordance with the wishes of his constituents, feels in his own heart and conscience that the death penalty should be maintained in cases of undisputed murder.

[English]

**Mr. Choquette:** May I ask the hon. member a question, Mr. Speaker?

[Translation]

**Mr. Mongrain:** Certainly, providing he asks it in French.

**Mr. Choquette:** The question I wanted to ask to the hon. member is the following. Not very long ago he made a rousing appeal here, in the house, in favour of convicted separatists and he asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) if it would not be appropriate to grant them an amnesty and to petition Her Majesty the Queen accordingly.

Would the hon. member agree, as a generous gesture of amnesty towards those whose cause he was pleading recently, to vote in favour of a measure which will precisely save them from the sad fate he has in mind?

**Mr. Mongrain:** Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Lotbinière speaks, he always gives me the impression of being a conjurer who tries to make you see one thing while