

the power to commute sentences and have been commuting sentences. There was absolutely no need for the government to introduce this subject for the second time. According to the polls I have seen, the most recent of which being the one conducted at Expo, the people of Canada favour retention of the death penalty. As I have said, the government has complete control of this situation. The Prime Minister described as barbaric those people who favour retaining the death penalty. While I cannot do so with the eloquence of the hon. member for Queens, I should like to say this attitude on the part of the Prime Minister is most unfair. I believe it is unfair, too, to those judges in the country who have been properly carrying out the law of this country over a period of years by imposing the death sentence on those convicted of murder.

Since this subject has been introduced for a second time, it is very difficult to avoid repetition. I should like to refer for a moment to one strong abolitionist in the house who has quoted the Bible to illustrate that capital punishment should be abolished. I would remind him that we can point to many passages in the Bible which support the imposition of the death sentence upon a murderer. I must say this same member—and this struck me as rather strange—said there are people who are too cowardly to commit suicide, so they murder someone, realizing that they will be put to death for it. This is the way they choose to commit suicide. This is the most ridiculous argument I have ever heard, and it was put forward by a member of this house in favour of abolition. What makes the argument even more ridiculous is the fact that anyone contemplating suicide who adopts this method is going to wait a long while before achieving his desired result under this government, because it has commuted every sentence. I ask the Solicitor General to consider that so that he does not get emotionally upset if the vote goes the way it should go and we retain capital punishment.

● (4:20 p.m.)

I have many friends in police forces whom I respect greatly, though I do not know any prison guards. In Cape Breton we are not interested in prisons and do not have much use for them. However, I do not know how the government can bring in a measure to protect two classes in our community, yet completely disregard other people about whom the Solicitor General might become far more emotional should they be the victims of

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a murderer. Such cases touch the emotions much more than the murder of policemen or prison guards. I submit that if we are retaining capital punishment in cases of murders of policemen or prison guards, we should also include, as other members of the house have indicated, friends and relatives.

The hon. member for Queens also referred to the charge of obstruction; and there was a bit of obstruction this afternoon. Because members are on one side of the argument they are asked to sit down, to shut up, and there are cries of "Question". I will accept the charge of obstruction from the other side of the house for the very reason that I am going to throw it right back at the government.

This government has been obstructing parliament ever since it reintroduced this issue. This government has been delaying important matters while parliament debates a matter it has already decided. This is the most obvious form of obstruction the house has ever been faced with. While the government saddles the House of Commons with this issue, on other questions it charges obstruction.

The government has been concerning itself with convicted murderers, at the expense of many innocent and law abiding citizens who today are faced with problems requiring prompt attention. Time and again the Prime Minister and other ministers of the crown remind us of the value of the time of the house. I am using the time of the house now to point out to the government that this is the most blatant case of obstruction in the house that I have ever witnessed. As I have said, repetition in this matter is inevitable; yet the government refuses to deal with the problems facing our law abiding citizens.

I could take up the time of the house to give the minister many reasons why this particular issue should never have been allowed to come before parliament. The government talk of their concern about this question, but I suggest that the greatest concern the government could have shown was in connection with an event that occurred in the city of Sydney last week end, when over 20,000 people gathered to express their anxiety over a problem that the government could and should be dealing with, instead of devoting time to convicted murderers. This issue has been decided, yet the government has not in any way, shape or form carried out the wishes of this parliament or the law of the country.