

### Adjournment

interests of the public. The parliamentary system is not a system by referendum.

We have had three so-called referendums at the federal level in Canadian history, one on prohibition of liquor, one on conscription, and one on the Charlottetown accord. They were all advisory; none of them was binding. As a matter of fact, in the one on conscription and the one on prohibition the government of the day did not slavishly follow the results of the referendum. As a matter of fact, in the conscription case, although the country overwhelmingly voted yes for conscription, we ended up with a system where there was only conscription for service in Canada.

In any case, we have no system of binding referendums in this country. But if we are going to decide questions by referendum then it should be done according to a policy and not simply on an ad hoc basis. A referendum cannot be called only when you think you are going to win the case.

For example, would the hon. members in the Reform Party call for referendums on gun control or on medically assisted suicide? I notice that while they slavishly follow the polls with respect to who wants capital punishment, they ignored the popular polls with respect to gun control and also ignored the polls with respect to medically assisted suicide.

If we are going to have referendums we have to decide by policy or by legislation what matters are to be decided and not simply call for them when we think we are going to win. That is no way to run a government.

**Mr. Calder:** That is government by opportunism.

**Mr. Allmand:** My hon. colleague says that is government by opportunism, and that is what it is: if you think you can win a referendum you hold one and you do not call for it when you think you will not win. For example, would this Parliament or the people of Canada be willing to have a referendum on the GST or unemployment insurance or other difficult issues?

The Reform member spoke about keeping horrible murderers in prison at public expense. When we take the total number of inmates and divide it into the total cost of our prison system, it comes to about \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year for the most serious criminals. I know Reform members understand arithmetic. This does not mean that if one criminal is executed we would save \$60,000, because there are fixed costs in the system. If we are really going to save money we would have to execute about 100 criminals a year, I would surmise. Then we could close a prison. Most of our prisons hold about 300 or 400 inmates. If we were really going to save any money we would execute about 100 a year to save a decent amount of money. If we were to start doing that we would rank with the Republic of China in executions. The countries that led the world recently in executions were

South Africa and China. We would join that select club if we were to simply execute people to save money.

If we in the House are really serious about protecting the public from violent crime then we have to concentrate on preventive measures, concentrate on measures directed to the causes of violent crime. Capital punishment is a measure to be applied after the murder has taken place. It is a post factum penalty. Penalties are necessary in our criminal law. As I said, we should not have this extreme penalty because of the many objections to it. While penalties are necessary, they will not solve the crime problem. We will solve the crime problem by concentrating on measures to prevent crime and measures directed at the causes of crime.

In conclusion, we cannot convince a society that it is wrong to take a life when the state is ready and willing to take lives.

There are many more arguments and many more aspects to this debate, but we cannot cover them all in 10 minutes.

• (1830)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the word is out: Federal goodies are on their way to Western Canada. Cheques for a total amount of \$1.6 billion are being or will be sent directly to grain producers in the Prairies. This compensation for the loss of western grain transportation subsidies gives and will give western producers an unfair edge over farmers in Eastern Canada, especially in Quebec.

Many grain producers are taking advantage of this windfall to diversify production and flood Quebec with their products. Since part of the compensation is paid for through taxes they pay to Ottawa, Quebecers may be doubly penalized. Here is an example. Quebec's subsidies for industrial milk are being cut by