

Capital Punishment

that I lied, if I lied. He knows that I am right, because what I say is right.

The whole population of Canada thinks that way. Not only the constituents of the hon. member's riding, everybody has the same feeling.

Mr. Bécharde: Speak for yourself.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): No, I also speak for Canadians. I am the leader of a national party, I speak for the guidance of the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police goes on:

... and we challenge anyone to prove to us the contrary ...

—to show us that this has become a frightening danger.

... the legislator should maybe have on his conscience the killings of police officers and prison guards because of the absence of appropriate protection.

Each member of our association eagerly awaits the day when no punishment will be necessary.

And so do I. Mr. Speaker, nobody likes hanging, not even those who favour the death penalty.

● (1610)

Hanging is for the real and known killer who will never be brought back to a normal or a reasonable way of life, and, Mr. Speaker, we tell them: The killers have been warned and if they kill they know what to expect. But no, the government prefers to protect criminals, even to the detriment of society, and to the detriment of its people. The police officers write on:

Unfortunately, the nature of man is such that there will always be some people who will be hostile to their neighbour and who will be led to commit crimes. The only way to prevent it is by way of punishment. No one would like to see someone condemned for a single mistake and, to this effect, we believe that the arguments voiced by both abolitionists and retentionists could meet in a middle path, mainly that, in the absence of the execution, whether by commutation of the sentence or otherwise, the repetition of a first act of violence such as those now punished by capital punishment, would lead automatically to banishment for life from our society.

We are confident that the democratic principles with which we all want to identify will come first when you make your decision.

Respectfully yours,

Bernard E. Poirier, L.L.L.,
Executive Director.

Mr. Speaker, Wednesday we shall vote on third reading, that is on the final stage of Bill C-84. As we are about to vote on this bill, all of my colleagues have spoken, and you will note that with no influence on my part or on the part of anyone else, each one was truly free to express his opinion, and to take a position, and that 11 out of 11 members have voted against Bill C-84, not out of a wish for revenge, but to say to those who might propose to commit crimes or murders: Gentlemen, watch out! Do not take someone else's life or else you will have to give up your own life to pay for the one that you have removed from society. Then, Mr. Speaker, the individual is truly free: If he wants to hang, he can act consequently, and we, the Parliament or the government, shall apply the law so that this individual will be punished exactly like he could expect to be because of his actions. As the Canadian Par-

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

liament is preparing to abolish the death penalty we can read in American newspapers, and recently in the *La Presse* newspaper of July 3, 1976:

The Supreme Court maintains the death penalty in the U.S.A.

This means throughout the United States. There are states where the death sentence is commuted to life imprisonment. There are others, like Florida, Georgia, Texas where the death penalty is still in force. There are rather highly organized movements in Great Britain seeking the reestablishment of the death penalty. There are other countries where no thought has been given to abolishing it, for instance in most African countries. The death penalty is still in existence in France, and when the French Minister of Foreign Affairs came to Canada recently, he said: I am in favour of the death penalty in extreme cases. This is what we are asking. We are not asking the Solicitor General to hang all criminals for any reason whatsoever, we are asking him, in extreme cases, in the case of murders committed for gain, to take the criminal and hang him or put him in the electric chair or to use any other means to eliminate him to protect society.

I have often heard the Solicitor General say: There are other means than the death penalty to protect society. I have often asked him: Give us those means, tell us that they are. Mr. Speaker, no means have ever been suggested. The Solicitor General is always saying that there are better means than the death penalty to stop crime, and Montreal has now had murder number 53 or 54 for 1976. That represents an average of over 100 a year and it seems like the Solicitor General does not see or does not pay attention to what is going on around him.

Mr. Speaker, if the United States sees fit to maintain that penalty, if England is talking about reinstating it, if in other countries of the world there is renewed talk of returning to capital punishment that is so because indeed there are criminals for whom there is absolutely no hope. There is hope for some, yes. Murders are committed for which the death penalty should not be applied, yes. But we say that in cases of premeditated, planned, loathsome murders where the guy has his gun fully loaded those people are not going to the St. Joseph Oratory to pray St. Joseph or Brother Andrew. No, sir. They go into a small grocery to kill the guy if he resists. It is going to cost us \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year to keep those people in jail during 25 years. And that would be reasoning? Mr. Speaker, that is not reasoning. I think the general public reasons better than this government. And I would like to know once more what organization or organizations asked this government to introduce Bill C-84, for all practical purposes an act to abolish the death penalty in Canada.

In concluding, I say we are going to vote conscientiously against Bill C-84, and I ask the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) to convince his leader, before he starts convincing the Liberals, to vote against Bill C-84 and also convince his former leader, the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), to vote against this bill. Then, he may try to convince the Liberals, ministers or others, to vote against Bill C-84 that I consider to be a terrible calamity against society, against the honest citizen of Canada.