

*Capital Punishment*

the time has come to stop lulling the Canadian people into believing everything will be fine if only they blindly follow. I for one have more faith than that in my fellow citizens. I would certainly derive no pleasure or satisfaction from saying I told you so, but I do wish that this parliament would face the fact that our society is not perfect, that crime does exist, and finally that we do have a responsibility to fight crime. Mr. Speaker, let us express the will of the people and continue capital punishment.

**Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, lest I be accused of benefitting from yesterday's order to prolong this debate, I will be very brief. My primary intention in rising is to correct an impression that was left by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) when he indicated that the Donald Kelly case, as I see it in *Hansard*, almost bankrupted the municipality. I trust he was speaking of North Bay. Mr. Speaker, I should like to indicate for the record that the total cost of that chase was somewhere in the vicinity of \$101,000, \$92,000 of which was paid by the province of Ontario. Out of a total budget of \$20.5 million for the city of North Bay, even if the Province of Ontario had not paid the amounts to which I have referred, surely there was no indication of an insolvency on the part of North Bay, a city by the way which is on a very sound financial basis and enjoying a fruitful economic life as well as a social life.

Also I should like to place on the record my intention to support the government's bill in this instance.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Blais:** I have listened with a great deal of attention to the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. I have heard those arguments before. I am not persuaded by them and I am sure he has not been persuaded by the arguments advanced by the abolitionists from whichever side of the House they may have been made.

In order to shorten my remarks I would simply adopt those arguments which have been advanced by the abolitionists that an act of hanging or execution, whether public or private, is in effect a collective act of violence. By such an act society condones violence and by condoning encourages it. I could not accept such a collective act of violence. Secondly, I am persuaded that capital punishment does not act as a deterrent in any sense. Statistics have been presented on both sides of that argument. I am persuaded it is not a deterrent.

The third argument flows directly from that, namely that I can see capital punishment in instances where it would be required as a means of self-defence, that is a method of self-defence available to society. I fail to see, when we have one of the most advanced systems of criminal justice and one of the most elaborate and sophisticated systems of the administration of justice, that indeed collective killing can serve as a means of self-defence.

Those are my comments. I will not vote in favour of capital punishment. I am pleased that the government has presented in this instance a bill proposing total abolition and I commend it for that measure.

[Mr. McKenzie.]

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, may I speak on that point of order?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. Is the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre asking a question?

**Mr. McKenzie:** I did not hear the hon. member's original remarks. Was he speaking on a point of order?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** No. He was recognized as a speaker for a short period of time.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, may I speak on a point of order? I will apologize and withdraw the remark about bankruptcy in the honourable area of North Bay, but the area certainly was subjected to some financial problems. I believe the latest news reports show that the city is trying to negotiate more funds from the Ontario government to help pay for the excessive police costs. I will put this on the record and withdraw the bankruptcy statement.

● (1130)

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point to indicate that there is a dispute between the provincial authorities and the municipal authorities relating, I believe, to some overtime costs and statutory payments amounting to \$9,000. However, that is a very small amount in comparison with the total budget of the police commission of \$9.2 million.

While I am on my feet, I should like to indicate that indeed in rising I did not wish to demonstrate bravado in response to those of my constituents who have indicated that they wished me to support capital punishment. I would simply like to say that I have received correspondence from both sides, from those who wanted me to support capital punishment and from those who wished me to support the bill now before the House. I have dealt with them both on the same basis. I indicated to them that in accordance with parliamentary tradition my responsibility is to exercise my judgment in accordance with my conscience. If we agree that there is to be a free vote on this bill in the absence of whips, which means that hon. members will vote in accordance with their consciences freely and openly, then that is the way in which I intend to vote.

**Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton):** Mr. Speaker, I will not say in my opening remarks that it is a pleasure to be able to speak today on Bill C-84. It has never been a pleasure for me to rise in this House and discuss the pros and cons of the death penalty. However, I feel now as I have always felt that it is my responsibility to take part in these debates. It is my responsibility as a member of parliament, my responsibility to my constituents, and my responsibility to myself as a concerned Canadian.

I call again on the government to reinstate the death penalty for premeditated murders. I do so in the full knowledge that it is the will of the great majority of Canadians that we take drastic and serious measures to protect them from those people in our society who would take the life of another. I ask for the reinstatement of the death penalty for capital murder not because I have a low regard for life, but rather because I have such a high regard for life. I believe sincerely that we in the House