

Supply—Justice

eventual application of the two-nation concept.

For my part, Mr. Chairman, in reading from cover to cover the book written by the premier of Quebec, Mr. Daniel Johnson, I found some very interesting suggestions and a truly exhaustive definition of the two-nation concept. However, I would like to know to what extent the Progressive Conservative party endorses the views of Mr. Daniel Johnson, who maintains that federal-provincial conferences should be replaced by others where representatives of the French-Canadian nation would join representatives of the English-Canadian nation. This is a theory of the Conservative party, and I would like to know to what extent this problem will be considered at the next federal-provincial conference.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, with regard to capital punishment, the Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) has informed the house of the gist of the bill he intended to introduce. Up to a point, if the bill of the Solicitor General is passed, this could bring back the death penalty, as it has now been abolished for all practical purposes.

We know the cabinet majority philosophy in that respect. The cabinet has shown its majority to be against maintaining the death penalty, and it would be against their principles not to proceed with the commutations we have seen since 1966, when the bill was introduced in the house, which decided in favour of maintaining the death penalty. But if the bill introduced by the Solicitor General is passed, it will mean that the death penalty will not be abolished, as it would be applied in the case of those who kill or murder a policeman.

I wonder if the minister is able to tell us, as this is a government measure, whether capital punishment will be reinstated or whether commutation practices will be systematically continued. Should the latter be the case, that is, if death sentences are to be automatically commuted, I fail to see any need for reintroducing in the house the motion of the Solicitor General. I would only suggest that provincial justice authorities be requested to exercise as they see fit this royal prerogative, instead of the governor in council. This decision would be left with the lieutenant governor in council; thus, we would be relieved of this constitutional burden. This would be quite logical, since, as I said earlier, the administration of justice is a provincial responsibility.

[Mr. Choquette.]

Now, I refer all those questions to the attention of the minister. In addition, I say that if the bill introduced by the Solicitor General is passed by the house and if the government really intends to enforce the legislation as drawn up, that is to impose the death penalty for the murder of a policeman, then I will be pleased to support the bill which the Solicitor General wishes to submit. Otherwise, I think it is useless to have the house waste its time and ask it to vote on a legislation which, for all practical purposes, will be in-existent.

• (8.10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to follow the hon. member for Lotbinière in speaking in this debate. A few moments ago I had the pleasure of meeting his brother, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that hon. gentleman to be a very agreeable sort of fellow. I am sure the whole committee will be very pleasantly surprised that not only is he an agreeable chap, he is also sensible.

Mr. Choquette: He is not a politician.

Mr. Nugent: I hope I will have more pleasant surprises about that family. Perhaps if the hon. member for Lotbinière took a few lessons from his brother we might hear a little less nonsense from him from time to time in this chamber.

[Translation]

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. I do not have to know the brothers of the hon. member to know that he is unpleasant and that his behaviour is disagreeable.

[English]

Mr. Nugent: I am always pleased to note that the hon. member maintains his usual standard of intelligence, so that we can always hope for improvement.

I only wish to intervene for a few moments this evening because I have been greatly disturbed in the house to hear what I consider an unwarranted attack on the system of justice in this country, and what I consider to be an irresponsible attitude not only on the part of many citizens in the country but certain members of parliament regarding the administration of justice. I am one of those who has always felt it to be the duty of members of this house to uphold the institutions of this country, the system of justice, and our duty to back to the hilt our