

cially with regard to capital punishment and, if need be, the problem of abortion. After hearing the arguments and gathering all the information we have a duty to this country, to ourselves and to our constituents to exercise in all honesty our best judgment. There is no duty upon us to reflect the wishes of the various constituents. As Your Honour knows, the wishes of the constituents change from day to day.

Many people whom I met in the past few months spoke to me about their feelings concerning capital punishment. Those feelings were possibly changed as a result of discussions not only with myself but with other people. This is the democratic process, a process we must maintain. To come here and just be a rubber-stamp with regard to the wishes of the people does not reflect well on we as members or on the parliamentary process.

We had one example of a plebiscite in Canada. That was in 1942. The plebiscite was on the question of conscription. What did it prove? It proved, first, that Mackenzie King and his cabinet colleagues did not have the moral courage to make that decision. Second, the conscription issue created a great deal of ill-feeling across the country. I imagine a national plebiscite on abortion or capital punishment would obtain the same result. This is not why we are here.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has given me a copy of his "bible", which is called Beauchesne's. I quote as follows from section 17 on page 14 of the fourth edition of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms:

Every member as soon as he is chosen becomes a representative of the whole body of the commons, without any distinction of the place from whence he is sent to Parliament . . . that every member is equally a representative of the whole has been the constant notion and language of Parliament. Every member, though chosen by one particular district, when elected and returned, serves for the whole realm. For the end of his coming thither is not particular, but general, not barely to advantage his constituents, but the commonwealth.

In November, 1774, Edmund Burke was invited, on short notice, to stand for one of the two vacant seats at Bristol. He was a stranger to the place, but his colleague was a local gentleman of accommodating nature, who expressed his willingness to carry out any instructions which he might receive from his constituents.

If I remember correctly, this is one of the reasons the hon. member brought forward his bill.

Burke was duly elected, and in his subsequent address to the electors he touched on the topic of instructions to members. This is what he said:

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But, his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

"My worthy colleague says his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent: if government were a matter of will upon my side, yours, without question, ought to be

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superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not to inclination; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

"To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of the land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent, and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed: but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament."

● (1740)

That was Sir Edmund Burke in 1774, and what he said then applies with equal force today, or perhaps with even greater force because of the social issues which we must face. We must face them in good conscience and with the exercise of good judgment, and to abrogate our responsibility by demanding legislation determined by a plebiscite with regard to these issues is not worthy of us as members of the House of Commons. Sir Edmund Burke said we have a duty not merely to our constituencies but to the whole country. We have a duty to exercise our judgment and our conscience after hearing all the arguments relating to a particular issue.

It is for this reason I oppose very strongly the idea of a national plebiscite, whether on abortion, capital punishment or any other issue. We must not become mere rubber-stamps, and it is for this reason I totally oppose the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Albanie Morin (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is my duty today to say a few words for or against abortion.

[*English*]

I rise to speak in opposition to the bill which has been presented by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds). I congratulate him on his desire to raise the matter in the House of Commons and on his initiative in presenting the measure. I cannot support him however, because I do not believe the solution he proposes is the correct one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had suggested for instance helping the unwed mother either by improving her conditions of life or by providing some assistance for her in society, or by creating day care centres to help her with her child, I would have supported him wholeheartedly. But what he suggests will not solve these problems.

He speaks of referendum. First of all, how would you explain the problem to the Canadian people? He would