

A 35-page brief which has been submitted to the Solicitor General as well as to the federal cabinet. I go on with the quotation:

The latter, far more than the right alone of the association will bring, we are convinced of it, new and decisive arguments to strengthen the open and frank position of those who oppose the bill, and to win over the dissidents.

The stakes are high, namely our institutions, the security of each and every Canadian citizen, law and order in our land.

Sincerely,

J. P. Pelletier,
President

In addition, I have a letter from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, 116 Albert St., Ottawa. I quote:

Comments addressed to members of the House of Commons and addendum to the CACP brief on capital punishment

In view of the possibility that Bill C-84 on capital punishment may not be referred to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Justice and Legal Affairs, we wish to draw your attention to the following observations:

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is studying with keen interest the debate now in progress on capital punishment and we wish to assure each and everyone that we respect all opinions expressed, as well by those who want abolition as those who would keep the death penalty.

Through the briefs we have already presented on that matter, we have clearly indicated our position in favour of retention and any further discussion would only bore you. However we wish to point out that in none of the speeches delivered so far is there any of our recommendation . . .

They will now have the assurance that someone did mention their recommendation in the House of Commons. I go on with the quotation:

. . . that a committee be set up with people representing the executive, the legislative and the judiciary to examine carefully the permanent banishment of an offender and its alternatives. The alternative proposed in Bill C-84 does not stem from careful consideration but can be considered as a deceptive replacement so that capital punishment will be deleted from our legislation. This assertion is based largely on the comments made by the hon. Warren Allmand to the John Howard Society in Ottawa, on April 8 last, when asked that question, that of course a 25-years term was too harsh but that first we had to get rid of capital punishment and then we could all work together to reduce this imprisonment period.

Do you realize the sincerity and frankness of the Solicitor General of Canada? He is an hypocrit and a liar, in my opinion, nothing else, by moving bill to abolish capital punishment, just so he can later reduce the number of years from 25 to 5, 10, 7 or 8 years. The Solicitor General has it in mind, but he is not frank enough to say so here in the House.

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

Such a philosophy deeply concerns us because even if the period proposed under Bill C-84 remains in force, it includes a threat and a much graver danger to our society and more particularly to our prison guards.

In view of this philosophy, we submit that the minimum sentence of 25 years as provided in Bill C-84 is a false flashy representation because, in practice, an individual would have the right to ask, after serving 15 years, a reduction of his sentence.

We also believe that a minimum sentence of 10 years in some murder cases is much too severe compared with that of the odious individual who thinks only of killing for money.

No matter where those contract murderers operate, be it in Quebec or elsewhere, they belong to the same kind, to

Capital Punishment

the same rapacious gang, ready to take the life of anyone as long that they get money to do it. I resume the quotation:

What is the protection given to those whose duties are to keep this vicious mafia? A prison sentence merely means that the person who deserves capital punishment will be able to kill at will. Even with retention of capital punishment, the traditional commuting would have the same effect.

Since we, as representatives of police forces throughout Canada, have a knowledge of criminal life accessible to very few people outside our profession, we feel duty bound to express our deepest concern directly to you, our legislator. Furthermore, the police community and even all our society remains certainly perplex after hearing coming from the same breath a plea for the survival of a political party and the abolition of capital punishment. The conscience of the legislator should not be troubled the least bit concerning capital punishment, since the public itself has expressed time and time again its desire to retain it.

The ministers are well aware of that, even hon. members, particularly those I know well and who are from the province of Quebec. Yesterday, speaking on CJMS radio in Montreal, I said so plainly. I took a riding as an example, that of Montreal-Mercier, where 95 per cent of the population is in favour of retaining capital punishment. How can the member who represents them in this House say: "When the free vote is taken, freely and conscientiously, I vote against 95 per cent of my constituents".

Mr. Speaker, this also applies to the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I challenge the hon. member—

Mr. Béchard: Yes!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —to accompany me in his constituency to conduct a poll—

Mr. Béchard: I made one.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —and find out that the majority favour retention.

Mr. Béchard: I voted four times for abolition.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —for abolition. What made him change his mind? Are the pressures of the government compelling him to vote for the abolition of the death penalty?

Mr. Béchard: Speak for yourself!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): He is the undecided type who always follows the party.

Mr. Speaker, I go on with my quote:

If we are convinced, beyond any doubt, that the death penalty has a deterrent effect, . . .

Mr. Béchard: Nonsense.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): The hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine says that it is nonsense. I offer to send a letter to his riding—

Mr. Béchard: I already made a poll.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —and so to prove to him that the majority of the people in his riding favour the death penalty in Canada. The hon. member rises to tell me