

and crime. As someone once said, capital punishment, while pretending to support a reverence for life does in fact tend to destroy it.

I cannot think of a more fitting quotation with which to conclude my remarks than a paragraph from an editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 28, 1965:

The *Citizen* stands for abolition because it does not believe capital punishment deters murder, and because it believes that executions degrade society, whereas abolition would to that extent enoble it and thereby enoble every individual member of society.

And again from the editorial pages of the *Citizen* dated March 7, 1966, I should like to quote the following:

The trend in the western world is to abolish the death penalty as a barbaric relic of the past. Studies carried out in those countries where abolition has taken place show that the hangman's rope cannot be regarded as an effective deterrent to murder. A private member's bill was recently the vehicle for getting rid of capital punishment in Britain. It is to be hoped that this action is repeated in Canada.

After listening to several excellent contributions to this debate from both sides of the house, I wish to congratulate those who have taken part in the debate, and I am encouraged to think that after the division bells have ceased to ring and this bill comes to a vote, the majority of the members of this house will place Canada on the list of enlightened nations by outlawing the death penalty, with the exceptions contained in the bill which should satisfy the consciences of those who voted against abolition in 1966.

**Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Prince Edward-Lennox):** Mr. Speaker, I know we speak for the vast majority of the Canadian people when we deplore the actions of this government whereby, despite the serious economic ills which now beset our country and the need for useful and beneficial legislation concerning economic matters, the government now wastes the time of parliament by sponsoring this bill dealing with the Criminal Code, which will be productive of nothing of benefit to Canada. In fact, this bill tampers with the safety of the citizens. I was surprised also a few moments ago to hear the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) say that a compromise is better than the direct will of the Canadian people as expressed by the majority in parliament not very long ago.

I have followed this debate with interest, and I now have some remarks I wish to

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make concerning this Bill No. C-168. It is only 18 months ago that this government received instructions from the parliament of Canada, and thereby from the people of Canada, to maintain and enforce capital punishment for capital murder. These instructions have been flouted, Mr. Speaker, and disobeyed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) by the Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) and by all the cabinet.

In the meantime I have endeavoured, as an advocate of the retention of capital punishment, to point out a few of the facts of government to the members of the cabinet whose duty it is, from time to time, to make the painful and sometimes unpleasant decision as to the life or death of certain citizens. These cabinet members receive certain added emoluments because of these other onerous duties. This cabinet has said, in effect, by its actions, right from the time it was sworn into office, "We want to be rid of this obligation; we will not back up the dutiful decisions of the judges of our courts".

Surely, Mr. Speaker, every capital murder case that comes before the cabinet for either confirmation of the death sentence or for commutation has not been always worthy of commutation. The position of the Prime Minister, the Solicitor General, yes, and the government as a whole, regarding the protection of persons and property, the upholding or obeying of the law, the support of the judiciary, has been completely indefensible. Having regard for our system of responsible government, I might say that the actions of the government, or lack of them, might have resulted in the resignation of the government in days gone by. But no, Mr. Speaker, this government just has a little conference with some of its crutches, namely the members of the N.D.P., and that great sentimentalist the Solicitor General trots out Bill No. C-168, which is the greatest anomaly of compromise and contradiction in the sad history of the Pearson régime.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not need to repeat the clauses of the bill. Hon. members know the bill provides for the abolition of capital punishment for a trial period of five years in cases of capital murder, except for the murder of certain categories of policemen and prison guards.

• (8:50 p.m.)

On April 5, 1966 we voted in this house on what was known as the Klein amendment, which had pretty much the same effect as the