

felt that the handling of the problem of murder ought not to be by such measures as the gallows and the gas chamber, but that we must go into places like the slums and the ghettos of our cities, into clinics and so on, to try to prevent the crime of murder in its early stages. If there are any school teachers within the sound of my voice, they will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the crime of murder has its seeds planted very much earlier than the actual commission of such a crime. The seeds of murder are planted in injustice and misery, in the broken homes and in the wrong teachings of parents in their homes.

As for my own stand on this matter, I have said that I am an abolitionist. I have found that very wise things have been said by people from a number of areas. I mentioned the churches a moment ago. One of the most interesting, and to me most significant and altogether moving, expressions on the subject of capital punishment was given by the Canadian Catholic Conference. I should like to quote from this statement by the Reverend W. E. Power, president of the Canadian Catholic Conference. It is dated January 26, 1973. I quote this statement for its thoughtfulness and impressiveness. He says in part:

The question of the death penalty, in our opinion, ought not to focus on whether a convicted murderer, no matter how wanton "deserves" to die. The focus should be on us: should Canadians as a community try to break the escalating spiral of violence by refraining from violence even as a deterrent?

Then, leaving out a paragraph, I continue:

There is also a pragmatic, statistical question whether the death penalty is an effective deterrent. We will not enter this debate. Our question is not whether the death penalty is an effective deterrent; our question is whether it is an absolutely necessary deterrent, required by good order in Canada today. Unless you are convinced that it is, then we feel that the presumption should be for suspension. Furthermore, in our opinion, the case for retention of the death penalty has not been proven.

● (1520)

We would hope that, during a possible second period of suspension, research committees would study exhaustively all the ramifications of this complex problem and publish their reports within a specified period. We might note the need for study of the effects of violent crime on the families of both the criminal and the victim.

I would also add that I should like studies made in respect of the effects of violent crime on communities and those children and adults who watch the media and listen to the hotliners, because in my opinion the spreading abroad of the details of these horrible, heinous and gory crimes, which we have witnessed in this country during the last few months, has done nothing to contribute to keeping down the climate of violence which is escalating in so frightening a manner these days.

My own stand is that it is up to a Member of Parliament to give leadership and to vote in accordance with what he or she believes to be right. In this connection, I should like to pay tribute to the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Reilly), who stated quite definitively in an article in *Saturday Night* this year that he believed, regardless of what the constituents thought or a majority of them might think, it would not be the duty of an hon. member to vote for or support something he or she believed to be evil. I also have written in this vein to a number of constituents.

### Capital Punishment

What good would it do a constituent to have a member who would get up on this issue and vote against what he, or in this case, she, believed? How could you ever again trust that hon. Member of Parliament to do anything honest if he or she was crooked enough to vote counter to what he or she believed merely because there was a sizeable group in the constituency that wanted this? Surely, we are not going to have members in this House who are prepared to vote for things, tongue in cheek, because they think it would be popular in their ridings. What a strange doctrine that is. Surely the members of the riding association and the constituency have chosen men and women they believe to be honest, intelligent and capable, people who will get the facts and vote accordingly. Some of these facts are more available to us than to the people in the riding. Surely, they trust us to get the facts and use our own judgment and then, in the light of that judgment stand up fearlessly and say what we believe to be right, without worrying about whether the constituent will hear what we have said and how we have voted in parliament. The greatest indignity and insult to the electorate in my opinion is for a member to duck the vote. I do not think we should do that.

In this country we have heard pleas from both sides of the House for leadership on a number of important issues, and this is an issue in respect of which I believe the people of this country are entitled to leadership from Members of Parliament. They are entitled to the best thinking of which we are capable, whether or not that thinking is different from what it was several years ago. Hon. members may well have changed their minds in the interim. I believe it is a wonderful thing to change your mind as a result of learning further facts and achieving greater maturity. I would be pleased if, in the light of further evidence or maturity, the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) could flip-flop back to where he was before. That would prove to me that he is capable of learning and changing his opinion in the light of further facts that have been adduced by community bodies which have made their weight felt following study of this matter.

From what I have learned, the death penalty is wrong and I certainly cannot vote to bring it back. I would vote for complete abolition, given the chance. If that choice is not before me and I must choose in favour of abolition with certain restrictions that may be applied following amendment during the committee stage, I am prepared within limits to vote for the abolition of the death penalty in instalments. I want to see the death penalty abolished, but I shall be happy to see the trend towards that objective continued. Having said this, I shall be very proud, as an honest woman, to go back and tell my constituents what I said and what I did.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I should like to place on the record the views of my constituents on this subject of capital punishment, and at the same time I should like to express certain personal thoughts on the legislation now before this House.

I find it most regrettable that the government has demonstrated what I believe to be little sincerity in its approach to this very serious and important subject. This