

I think this is an amendment which would receive widespread support from the public which has been shocked by the general laxity on the part of the government over the years in the treatment of offenders, by its generally permissive attitude toward many kinds of crime in terms of moderate sentences, and in terms of generous and lax administration of parole and other programs. We must recognize that there is general public demand for a firming up in our administration of the law.

Just a few years ago, for example, a young woman in a rural community not far from metropolitan Toronto was kidnapped by a gang of men and held for several days while they demanded a high ransom. But this crime led only to moderate prison sentences and within a couple of years most of these kidnapers were out on parole. It is this lax attitude toward serious crimes which has aroused the concern of the public. I believe the public would generally endorse this amendment, saying, "Should a life be taken during a kidnapping, execution would be the appropriate penalty." Therefore I hope that the amendment will carry.

Another reason is that we must be mindful of the way in which the threat of the death penalty can deter a potential murderer who is a kidnapper. We know that frequently kidnapers have taken the lives of those whom they have held for ransom, simply because this freed them from the threat of being identified by their victims at a later time. Having obtained the ransom, they were ruthlessly callous toward their victims. I believe they could be deterred by the threat of the death penalty. I would hope there would be general support for this amendment as an act of compassion to the kidnap victim. We see a lot of compassion for the people who commit these heinous crimes, but seldom do we shed a tear for the person whose life has been taken, perhaps after great suffering. I would hope that through compassion for that kind of person we would be prepared to offer these legal protections. Surely the law ought to be the arm by which society will protect its members against those who are really carrying on a war against society.

● (1520)

Similarly, the amendment calling for capital punishment in the instance of murder committed during rape calls for our support because this is an equally heinous crime, an example of heinous, indefensible murder. I hope that in the debate that may ensue nobody will mislead the House again by misrepresenting the issue, as has been done so often in the House and in committee, by pointing out how in times past there was capital punishment for theft, pickpocketing, horse thieving, and so on. I hope nobody will say that here is another example of wanting to have capital punishment for a whole series of crimes. Note, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment does not call for the addition of any more crimes; it calls for capital punishment to be invoked upon the perpetrator of the same crime, namely, murder. It is not calling for capital punishment for a kidnapper or a rapist as such, but for a murderer. It could be argued that one murder is like any other, but we have accepted in this parliament over more than a decade the distinction between capital and non-capital murder; we have accepted the distinction between one crime of murder and another—for example, between an

### *Capital Punishment*

act on impulse by someone who would not otherwise commit any crime, and a crime caused by ruthless disregard of the interests of others, the callous, lustful desire to impose one's will over others.

I believe that if we were to accept this amendment we would be moving in the direction that it is obvious an increasing majority of Canadian citizens want their government and parliament to move. It has been demonstrated by many members on both sides of the House that polls and surveys taken throughout the country have indicated a growing number of Canadians want a firming up in the administration of the law. They look upon the capital punishment issue as an example of that, because to a large degree Bill C-2 is not simply an act of legislation; it is a symbolic act, an act that symbolizes a permissive attitude on the part of many members of government who over the years have given priority to the interests of those who are committing crimes, rather than a priority to those who are their victims.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will have a change of direction here and will follow the direction that the Canadian people want us to follow. I believe that while this amendment could be called into question in this way or that, fundamentally it is pointing us in the direction that has majority support. This is not because most Canadians have some kind of blood lust that they are trying to satisfy, not because the Canadian people have a kind of sadism that they have to express through capital punishment but, rather, because the Canadian people want to put the criminal element of this country on notice that when a person takes the life of another, he risks the supreme penalty.

We might very well extend the list of crimes where capital punishment would be the penalty that could be invoked. Certainly, in the interests of protecting the lives of policemen and prison guards we have a minimum list, and in adding kidnapping and rape we are equally modest in extending the list available to us. I would therefore hope, Mr. Speaker, that in line with the desires of the Canadian people, expressed on a large number of occasions, parliament would support this amendment as a demonstration to the people that we mean business, that we are going to firm up our law enforcement and that we are going to use the law as it is intended, that is, to protect society.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, we are now considering the amendment introduced by the hon. member for Louis-Hébert (Mrs. Morin) to Bill C-2, amending the Criminal Code, and aimed at adding provisions to the existing legislation which stipulates that murderers of policemen or prison guards may be sentenced to death.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Louis-Hébert (Mrs. Morin) certainly deserves to be congratulated for her proposal, for the government is clearly set on the total abolishment of capital punishment in Canada.

For reasons well known to the House, the amendments introduced by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) have been "withdrawn from circulation" and we have resumed