

alternatives that work before they are deprived of an instrument which many Canadians believe or, more likely, hope will work. That is what we would like to have seen.

We have a bill before us now recommending a step of which I approve. We all have the obligation to deal with that particular bill. All of us, I think, as we work in parliament and live with law, recognize that there are limits to the effectiveness of laws, and all of us agree that it is foolish to write laws which we cannot enforce. I think it is wrong to write or to keep laws which do not do things people think they will do. I think that is particularly regrettable, and something we should avoid when that kind of law involves the official taking of human lives. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, my personal vote, which I emphasize will be a personal one, exercised as an individual member of parliament, will be to remove capital punishment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie)—External Affairs—Israel—Government view of action to establish communities in occupied Arab territory; the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—Air Canada—Alleged intention to move finance branch from Winnipeg—Government action; the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Manpower—Local Initiatives Program—Request for decision on extension of projects.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURES RESPECTING PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER AND OTHER SERIOUS OFFENCES

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Allmand that Bill C-84, to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the punishment for murder and certain other serious offences, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the leader of the opposition (Mr. Clark), before he has completed his remarks, would accept a question?

Mr. Clark: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Capital Punishment

Mr. Benjamin: I want to say that I appreciated the speech the leader of the opposition just made. However, because I know that he least of all people would not want to be thought to be on both sides of any question, I should like to ask him this question: If he were prime minister and the law was for capital punishment, would he like to reconsider his earlier remarks and say whether or not he would bring in legislation to remove capital punishment from the statutes?

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that too early in my career I would not have to resort to answering hypothetical questions. I have made it quite clear that as prime minister I would enforce capital punishment if that were the law of the land. I should also like to make it quite clear that important as this question is, I think the country faces other more urgent priorities which will be higher on the agenda of the government we form.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley (Mr. Jelinek).

Mr. Benjamin: On a point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. I would suggest to the hon. member that if he would like to make a speech, I would add his name to the list, but right now the hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley has been recognized.

● (1650)

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, being a retentionist, it is difficult for me to follow our leader. I want to point out that I certainly appreciate his statement made so emphatically on this matter, which is to come to a free vote, as an individual member rather than as a leader. What is more important is that we must all appreciate the fact that our leader stated that regardless of the outcome of this vote, when he becomes the prime minister—which he will two years from now—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: —unlike the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) whose time is running out—he will follow the wishes of the people and enforce the laws passed by this parliament, one way or the other. I see I only have a few minutes left, Mr. Speaker, but let me begin by saying that naturally we are all aware of the fact that a certain number of members have spoken on this bill on capital punishment, but there are great many more who still wish to speak. A sort of line score is being kept in this regard, and I suppose some pundits are also keeping score of the abolitionists and the retentionists.

We can deduce from these records that the government is in trouble on the issue of capital punishment, but of course that is understandable. The government seems to be in trouble all the time, and from one day to another it is simply a question of what the government is in trouble about on a given day of the week. This should not bother the government too much, because it only works and plans on a day to day basis or, at most, a week to week basis.