

*Capital Punishment*

which would therefore allow us to abolish capital punishment. No, we are no angels, and I do not know of any in this House. There is no need to have scruples, particularly because basic principles prevent us from doing so in view of the moral corruption, the violence as the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) pointed it out today, which is systematically shown on television, from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, in a society that teaches violence to its youngsters. When we finally talk about exercising some control over television, radio and the press, our honorable colleagues of the New Democratic Party are shocked, they rise as offended virgins in defence of the principles of freedom while at the same time taking a contradictory approach in their actions.

Mr. Speaker, once again this goes to show how sick our society is. We intentionally produce violent people and then we want to abolish capital punishment. This is utterly illogical. I repeat that our society needs capital punishment. When it will be proved to me that we have an almost perfect society, then it might be logical to consider the abolition of capital punishment. But in the meantime, we are far from that and whoever pretends that the material advancement which characterizes this phenomenal era of industrial and scientific progress, has improved the moral fibre of our society is all wrong. We have gone back to the Middle Ages and today, as some people would say, capital punishment is something left over from the dark ages.

I am sure that the crimes we are witnessing today are worse than those ever committed in the Middle Ages and with all those movies about violence on television, we are seeing things still worse than what may be described in any historical movie relating events which occurred in 1100 or 1200. This is much worse. Then, society today is worse than it was in the Middle Ages. Then, we can say that if the people are informed that in the future, anyone who commits a crime will be hanged, if someone does it, he will condemn himself.

In concluding, I would like to refute the argument brought about by those who say that the retentionists are motivated by a desire of revenge and some kind of cruelty. I shall tell them that it is even more cruel and inhuman to sentence a person to 25 years in prison. I recall that here in this House, my former colleague for Portneuf (Mr. Godin) had read a letter from Leopold Dion, the murderer of five children who had begged his member to arrange for him to be hanged. He could not bear living in the penitentiary. And this murderer was asking that the law be applied in his case. Who is cruel? I suggest it is those who ignored the desire of this criminal and preferred to have him rot in prison. This kind of Chinese torture is worse than hanging for who knows what to expect. So I think that tonight the majority of the members will have a chance to openly express the views of the vast majority of Canadians who favour the retention of the death penalty.

[English]

**Mr. Dean Whiteway (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, when I spoke on second reading of this bill I said we are embarked on a serious debate which demands sober judgment. Sir, the amendment we are considering will, if passed, provide for the execution of those convicted of murdering prison guards or policemen. This is not a debate between enlight-

[Mr. Matte.]

ened abolitionists and barbaric retentionists. Sir, this debate concerns the very roots of justice itself.

We speak of prison guards and policeman. Who are they? Who are these guards and policemen to whom we refer so glibly in this House? Sir, they are the fellows next door; I suppose I should add, as well, the gals next door. They are people with hopes and dreams; they experience the same joys and sorrows which you and I experience; their expectations are the same as yours or mine and they want to realize, to fulfil them the same as we do. They love life.

They are the people who protect us from those who would plunder our cities, destroy our freedoms, murder our people, strip us of our liberties, and clothe us with fear. Sir, our prison guards and policemen protect us from these elements, from criminals who act without regard for the historic values Canadians hold dear and the traditions which have been built within our nation, within our very borders, a bastion of strength and liberty. Sir, policemen are symbols of the authority which protects Canadian people. If you want to analyse the protection of the Canadian people, and resolve that these policemen and prison guards are symbolic of this protection, this protection is the will of the Canadian people to do right and to act against those who have no such will. It is the collective determination of Canadians to live free from fear and violence.

● (2050)

Seldom in the history of this parliament has the collective determination of the Canadian people been so clear. I am not refuting that from time to time parliament is called upon by the people of Canada to lead. It is a rightful duty of any parliament and any government to lead. Surely if it is the responsibility for parliament to lead, it is also the responsibility of parliament to reflect this obvious collective will of the people. It is blatantly obvious that the government is not in harmony with the collective will of the people, but the government by gentle reason and sound argument can lead the people until the two wills are a reciprocal echo of a determined direction. But the government is not displaying gentle leading. It is displaying a flagrant violation of its mandate.

Where there is no common will or purpose, there can be no justice. Laws ought to—and I know that often laws passed by this government do not—at least to some degree reflect the common will. The antithesis of courtroom justice is street justice.

It is alarming to me when I hear among the highways and byways of this country, in the coffee shops, on the street corners and in the homes, about Canadians taking justice in their own hands, executing justice on the spot rather than in the courts. It is a sad situation when the government by its inaction to reflect the common will forces Canadians to take this kind of justice, which is the way of anarchy.

Because the time is late and there are other members on this side who want to speak, I will conclude my remarks. However, I first wish to point out that when the government runs contrary to the obvious common will of the Canadian people it threatens to unravel the frail fibre of justice that was so carefully and intricately woven by our forefathers and is now jealously guarded by the courts of our land. This parliament must accept this amendment. I