

*Capital Punishment*

be involved, and I am impressed by the representations that have been made to me by those responsible for looking after people who are condemned to spend a goodly part of their lives in penitentiaries. If we adopt the bill sponsored by the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. McGee), and I hope the house will vote for it, I believe we should consider immediately the establishment of an institution to look after all men and women who are found guilty of murder. I believe that these people should not be confined in our existing penal institutions. If we abolish the death penalty the problem created would be very much worse and even the very lives of the guards in the penitentiaries would be endangered because if there is no longer a death penalty then the temptation to escape at all costs, even at the cost of the lives of a number of guards, might be a lure to a goodly number of those who had been found guilty of murder and who might not hesitate to commit murder again in the vain hope of escaping confinement. I think that a new national institution ought to be created that would ensure the protection of our public servants and in which there would also be a specific program of rehabilitation for these individuals.

I believe that one of the basic ingredients of a good law is that the people having the authority to make the law should also be willing to assume personal responsibility for its implementation. The present death penalty is the only penalty for murder under the Criminal Code and that is the responsibility of the House of Commons. In my opinion it is bad for members of the House of Commons to vote in favour of any piece of legislation for which they are unwilling to assume immediate and direct responsibility. I do not like to think that we may vote for the retention of capital punishment by voting against the bill now before the house and that we can then get away from our responsibility by hiring a hangman. I have every respect for the good intentions and integrity of every member of the House of Commons, and if members of the house decide in their wisdom to retain capital punishment I believe that each and every member of the house also has a responsibility to implement that law.

I think that what we are doing now by hiring a hangman is merely escaping our responsibility. If the house should decide to defeat the bill today or next week when the debate is continued, which I hope we will not, I believe that the carrying out of all future sentences of death ought to be set for the month of May, possibly around tulip time in Ottawa, and the hangings should take place on the beautiful lawns of parliament hill and each and every one of us—

[Mr. Regier.]

**Mr. Brunsdon:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member within the confines of the debate or is he straying into other fields?

**Mr. Habel:** He is still in the house anyhow.

**Mr. Speaker:** I suppose it is a question for me to answer but the hon. member who raised the point of order has not given me anything on which to base my judgment. I think the hon. member is perhaps talking about the repulsiveness of executions and it may be relevant to this debate.

**Mr. Regier:** I believe that no law should be passed by the House of Commons and the other place if members of the house and the other place are not prepared to assume personal responsibility for the implementation of that law. That is why I propose, if the law is going to continue as it now stands, that hangings ought to take place at a beautiful time of the year on the beautiful lawns of parliament hill, that they should be exposed to the public view and that each and every one of us should accept his responsibility. Despite my repulsion I will be willing to assume my fair share of the responsibility because I believe in democracy. If the house should vote for the retention of capital punishment then I am equally responsible for the decision of the house. In that event I think there should be 265 plus 102 yanks at the rope and I am offering to supply my yank at the rope.

I think all law, in the last analysis, must be considered in that light, namely that we have not the moral right—and this whole debate is a matter of conscience and morals—to hide behind an anonymous hanging. We must realize our personal responsibility. I am offering to realize mine and to abide by the majority decision.

Over the last several weeks I was greatly disappointed by representations made to me by certain religious organizations on this matter and I was highly pleased by the representations made by other religious organizations. However, human progress is slow indeed in the light of world history. I greatly regret to note that some of the leading Christian communities of Canada have not yet heard of the new testament and of the message of the new testament.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Regier:** I have been greatly disappointed on receiving a number of the representations I have received in this regard.

The hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Smith) referred to sentimentality or emotionalism in this regard. May I humbly submit, Mr. Speaker, that our whole democracy, our