

the penalties for misbehaviour. We are in no way responsible for the way citizens respond to legitimate decisions of this parliament; nor should we be influenced in the knowledge that in their disobedience of the law such persons will be imprisoned or put to death. The argument advanced by the Prime Minister in this regard is tantamount to undue pressure, impeding the freedom of thought for those who are about to take a very serious decision.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I totally reject the allegations of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) that, should Bill C-84 be defeated, those who vote against it will be responsible for the death of the murderers. None of us, including members of the cabinet, ought to feel guilty for action according to his conscience and enacting legislation to uphold social order and deterring the most hardened criminals from making attempts on the lives of others, especially policemen and prison guards. The first and only ones to be responsible for their own deaths would be those who have cold bloodedly slain their victims in defiance of a law which clearly and plainly stated the death penalty would be imposed for their crimes. Moreover, those criminals, during their trials and through appeals, had every chance to clear themselves and prove they deserved commutation.

The fact that the Prime Minister has thus attempted to personalize the debate, by pointing out to 11 prisoners awaiting the gallows, proves how desperate is the situation in which he has placed himself by trying to impose his own wishes on Parliament and the Canadian people.

However, it is the very same Prime Minister who has created this problem by systematically refusing, since 1968, to implement a legislation which has been twice ruled out by Parliament, during the time he has been a member of the cabinet. Only the Prime Minister is responsible for the situation in which he willingly placed himself and from which he is trying to extricate by setting up a detestable scarecrow to urge us to vote against our deepest convictions.

[English]

The Prime Minister knows very well that no member of parliament is asking for a mass execution of those waiting in the death rows. Every one of us, I dare say, would be satisfied to see the government exercise the royal prerogative of mercy in every case where it is warranted. As for the others, they knew the law when they committed their crimes. Moreover, they had been warned in no uncertain terms—

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** By the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Wagner:**—by the Prime Minister himself on May 16, 1973, when his government proposed Bill C-2. I quote what the Prime Minister said on that day, as reported in *Hansard*, page 3843:

Those who mock the desire of Canadians for an orderly, law-abiding community, those who hold in contempt those restraints on human conduct that enable us to live as free men and women, will be shown that society is not only resilient but that it is capable of protecting itself and of meting out whatever punishment is required.

● (1130)

That is the end of the quotation from the Prime Minister. You remember, Mr. Speaker, during the October crisis how

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the Prime Minister derided those weak-kneed bleeding hearts who, he said, were afraid to take the necessary measures to protect Canadians against a handful of FLQ members. You remember that, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

We also remember, Mr. Speaker, in what anguished terms the Prime Minister at that time—

**Mr. Béchard:** It sounds like a sermon!

**Mr. Wagner:** As the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Béchard) says, the Prime Minister's speech did sound like a sermon.

**Mr. Béchard:** Yours.

**Mr. Wagner:** That is right. It sounded like a sermon when he was then warning people that the next FLQ victims might be either a bank or credit union manager, or the corner grocer or even an innocent child.

Without echoing the melodramatic tone of the Prime Minister, would I not be even more justified in resorting to the same argument the head of the government used during the October crisis, because bank robbers and hired assassins have given us ample proof that they will never hesitate to kill to reach their ends.

Mr. Speaker, because of the importance of this text, I wish to repeat the warning given on May 16, 1973 by the very distinguished right hon. Prime Minister of Canada to potential murderers of policemen and prison guards, and I quote:

Those who mock the desire of Canadians for an orderly, lawabiding community, those who hold in contempt those restraints on human conduct that enable us to live as free men and women, will be shown that society is not only resilient but that it is capable of protecting itself and of meting out whatever punishment is required.

Now then, what was the punishment advocated by the Prime Minister, what was it? It was the death penalty for the murder of policemen killed on duty. The Prime Minister cannot deny it today because, on October 24, 1973, he voted for Bill C-2 on second reading. Mr. Speaker, either the Prime Minister was convinced in 1973 of the necessity to maintain capital punishment in some specific circumstances, and if so nothing can explain the automatic commutations of death sentences made since then, or—and Bill C-84 confirms it eloquently—the head of the government was resorting to subterfuges to hide his real intentions from Parliament, and in that case I leave it to the public to judge his actions. As it happens, Mr. Speaker, the great majority of this public want Bill C-84 defeated. We will soon know, in a few days probably, whether the will of the public or the will of Parliament, under the direction of the Prime Minister, under the direction of his majority government, will prevail.

[English]

I hope we will not hear any further tales from the government side about the so-called free vote on Bill C-84.

**An hon. Member:** Yes, you will.

**Mr. Wagner:** If we do, we shall respond. By moving this bill as a government bill, the Prime Minister has prevented his own colleagues in the cabinet—some of whom in the past have expressed contrary views—from now expressing