

*Capital Punishment*

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maily:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote from *Hansard* of February 18, 1960 when the great jurist and then Member for Parkdale, Mr. Arthur Maloney, said: "The death penalty is out of date; it is not an answer, nor will it ever be. The slow march of civilization has brought us to a point in our history where we should be ready here and now to vote in favour of its abolition."

And along the same line, the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker was recalling the progress of our civilization when he said: "Throughout the western world, it was in Canada that slavery was abolished for the first time in 1803. It is a prodigious record, coming as it did 40 years before slavery was abolished in the United Kingdom, and even longer before the date of its abolition in the United States."

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have the tradition of an advanced civilization, and I fail to see how my colleague can claim that reinstating capital punishment spells further progress for this civilization which is already headed in the right direction.

[*English*]

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, both Mr. Maloney and Mr. Diefenbaker expressed their opinions on this issue, as they were entitled to do. They had every right to make their case as best they could, as do each of us have the right to make our case as best we can.

Arthur Maloney may have said that it is never right to apply the death penalty, and he had that right. To my mind, in order to re-establish respect for life, it is necessary to have the option of capital punishment. In that way, the death penalty can be invoked where the circumstances warrant. That is what I am speaking in favour of.

The Hon. Member referred to the fact that we as a society were well ahead of others when it came to the question of slavery, and she wishes to compare that to the issue of capital punishment. I say that they are two different issues. If she wishes to compare capital punishment with another topic, let me ask her why it is that so many of those on the abolitionist side are in favour of abortion. I could submit to her that we should be the first nation to come to grips with the facts surrounding abortion and deal with that issue.

**Mrs. Maily:** We have.

**Mr. Reimer:** By doing so, we would start to uphold the sanctity of life. I would like to see Canada lead the way on the whole question of abortion, and I would like to have the Hon. Member's support for that.

To compare slavery to capital punishment is to compare apples and oranges. The two do not compare.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), on a question or comment.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the Hon. Member may say, capital punishment, in my view, is the mark of an uncivilized and immoral society.

I find it difficult to follow his logic, his reasoning. It appears obvious that his logic is somewhat flawed. One would question the hon. gentleman's credibility when on one hand he supports capital punishment and on the other hand he is opposed to abortion. In his submissions he suggested that members of the New Democratic Party were hypocritical because they are generally abolitionists and they are generally in favour of abortion on demand.

• (1350)

I would suggest to the Hon. Member that he is just as hypocritical as those members of the New Democratic Party who believe on one hand that human life is sacred and on the other hand that it is not.

I just cannot accept the Hon. Member's submission that on one hand life is sacred. If life is sacred, it is sacred, which means that it should not be taken regardless of how miserable that life may be.

He said with regard to abortion that we were talking about innocent life and therefore we should not be able to take innocent life, and he said with regard to capital punishment that somehow the person's life is not innocent. Who are we as mortals to determine the guilt of another human being resulting in the death penalty?

The Hon. Member seems to favour retribution as the basis of our criminal justice system. In effect what he is saying to the House is that he favours our criminal justice system being based on an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. We have progressed tremendously over the last—

**Mrs. Maily:** Two thousand years.

**Mr. Nunziata:**—two thousand years, as the Hon. Member is suggesting. However, the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer) is suggesting that we should return to the law of the jungle and in fact take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Would the Hon. Member explain the apparent hypocrisy in his position in that he argues human life is sacred, he says abortion is wrong, and he says capital punishment is right?

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the comments of the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), let me say that he quoted my use of the word "hypocritical" but he misapplied it. I am going to give it back to him the way I said it, not the way he misapplied it. What in fact is hypocritical by some in the NDP is that they enlist the support of some Roman Catholic spokesmen for their abolitionist position. That is what I said.

Then I went on to say that they turn a deaf ear to that same source, the Roman Catholic Church, which is unequivocal in