

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

[Translation]

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, although I was pleasantly surprised to see what improvements had been made, after visiting the cells, the kitchens, the classrooms and the rooms where the prisoners can learn a trade, which rooms are very well kept, although I was also pleasantly surprised to see how well qualified the personnel in charge of the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary are, I still feel that our penitentiaries are not equipped, do not have the required facilities, at the present time, to accommodate those who are sentenced to life imprisonment.

I believe the government should, before introducing a bill like the one now before us, take the necessary steps to correct, to remedy the present situation in our penal institutions.

It is true that there have been some great improvements. It is true that the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary—that one at least, because it is the only one I have visited—is much cleaner. I spoke with the staff of the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary and I was pleasantly surprised to find that they are fully qualified, that the penitentiary is clean and especially that the new warden, Mr. Lecor, is very competent.

However, I think that there is a lack of space and accommodation for those who are sentenced to life imprisonment.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a point which the Solicitor General of Canada (Mr. Pennell) should take into consideration.

I also wish Mr. Speaker to speak of the bill itself. I think that the bill in its present wording contains discriminatory provisions.

There is too much difference between the lives of certain police officers or prison guards, and the lives of citizens in general. I think that the life of one is as important as that of the other. I think there should be no discrimination such as contained in the bill.

This bill is something of a compromise which does not solve the problem in any way.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I simply wish to mention the reasons that lead me to oppose the bill. I object to the bill in its present wording.

I cannot agree with the clauses it contains, because they are not seriously relevant to the principle involved. I should like to suggest to the government that before such a principle or such a bill is carried, a referendum should be held, as was suggested yesterday. The reason is very simple. It is because, since the

inception of this debate on capital punishment, Mr. Speaker, I have received about 350 letters from the voters in my constituency of Lapointe and hardly five or six support the abolition of capital punishment. The 340 others are openly against the abolition of the death penalty.

Therefore, I think that the government should act by way of a referendum in order to ask the Canadian people to express their opinion. Then the government would introduce a bill in accordance with the ideas or the statements gathered from the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, these are the three reasons why I am opposed to the principle of the bill and to its second reading.

[English]

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the house ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**Mr. Speaker:** Call in the members.

[*And the members having been called in*]

● (3:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. May I suggest to hon. members that the vote might be taken by inviting members supporting the motion to rise starting with the first row to my right and then proceeding to the rows to my left, as we do in committee of the whole.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

The house divided on the motion (Mr. Pennell) which was agreed to on the following division:

## YEAS

Messrs:

Allmand	Barnett
Andras	Basford
Asselin (Richmond- Wolfe)	Batten
Badanai	Béchar
Baldwin	Beer
	Bell (Carleton)