

there will be a free vote which will follow, I just want to say that on this side of the House every vote is a free vote.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: Some of the boys have told me of a few conversations they have had with you, Mr. Prime Minister. Either you vote one way or the promotion does not go through. If you do not come into line, you are dead. What a laugh! The Prime Minister is trying to bring vaudeville back.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: Just stick to the funny stuff, Pierre; don't be serious.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if this comedian from Prince Edward-Hastings will give me a chance, I see that the notion of a free vote is something which sends them all into a state of shock over there.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Témiscamingue in a moment because it was his question originally. For the moment, the Chair will recognize the right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Trudeau: All I would add is that there are certain matters on which we have declared to our caucus that they are not matters of confidence in the sense that the government will not resign if it is defeated on them. We have drawn this to the attention of our caucus on the matter of capital punishment. In that sense they know that they can disagree with the cabinet. But I am sure that this kind of subject is away beyond the comprehension of the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: We know what you say to them.

● (1130)

[Translation]

SUGGESTED REFERENDUM ON PROPOSED ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

As the government is about to introduce in parliament amendments to the Criminal Code concerning the death penalty, can the Prime Minister tell the House why a referendum should not be held in order to know the opinion of the Canadian people, and not only that of the government?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that this proposal should get the support of the Progressive Conservative members; in fact, I thought the parliamentary system was of those where

members assume their responsibilities with courage and conviction.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): There goes another evasive answer.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. member for Prince Albert. Order, please. The hon. member for Témiscamingue rises on a point of order. I will recognize the right hon. gentleman thereafter.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, here is my point of order: the Prime Minister insinuates that hon. members cannot assume their responsibilities when they should do so. To my mind, we are here to express the will of our electors and not that of the Prime Minister or the leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada.

[English]

PROPOSED ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—
POSITION OF THOSE CONVICTED OF CAPITAL MURDER
NOW IN CUSTODY

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, in view of the extraordinary constitutional statement made by the Prime Minister I ask him this question. As parliament has voted in favour of preserving the death penalty for murders of police guards and custodial officers, and in view of the statement by the Solicitor General, corroborated by the Prime Minister, that the government intends to bring in a government measure to abolish capital punishment entirely, what about those now in custody who have been convicted of capital murder? Will the same system be followed in Canada that has been followed elsewhere, that the government's intended decision having been made to abolish capital punishment, executions will not take place of those who are at present in custody?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe that at this stage the question is hypothetical. There is no law which has been passed by parliament changing the present situation. If, as a vote on the measure which is before the House, we have to make some of these decisions, we will make them.

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INFORMATION CANADA

ALLEGED DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF MONTREAL
LEASE PRIOR TO TREASURY BOARD APPROVAL

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board. It is supplementary to the first question asked by the hon. member for Peace River. In view of the fact the starting date on the lease of the Information Canada book store in Montreal predated Treasury Board approval by some three and a half months, will the minister tell the