

I think this is a legitimate question and either the parliamentary secretary or the President of the Privy Council should be willing at this time to rise in the House and explain the reason this information is not being given, so that the matter will not stand in abeyance until the fall and be put off and put off like everything else this government does when it does not want to tell the people the truth.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cossitt: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Leeds was just recognized. He had the floor and completed developing his point of order. Then he sat down. Surely nothing could have happened in the interval that would give rise to a question of privilege.

Mr. Cossitt: Yes, Mr. Speaker, something did happen in the interval. The hon. member for St. Boniface asked me, across the floor of the House, how much money I received as president of the Leeds Liberal Association. I ask him to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): No way.

Mr. Cossitt: I also ask him—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Are you prepared to say how much you got?

Mr. Cossitt: I am prepared to say I never received one cent. I resent the implication, and I demand—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. No unparliamentary language was used or alleged to have been used in the exchange that has taken place. Besides that, the hon. member accepted the occasion to take the floor and put on the record whatever statement he wanted to make in response to the question.

Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURES RESPECTING PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER AND OTHER SERIOUS OFFENCES

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Allmand that Bill C-84, to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the punishment for murder and certain other serious offences, be read the third time and do pass, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Condon.

Capital Punishment

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, the debate on Bill C-84, the famous and notorious bill to abolish capital punishment, seems to be nearing a close. I spoke on this subject and on this bill early in the debate on second reading, and at that time I presented what I thought were reasonable and logical arguments for retaining capital punishment and for sincerely opposing Bill C-84. Since that time many pages of *Hansard* have been filled by those who have participated in the debate, some pros and some cons. A large majority of my constituents have made it quite clear to me by petitions, by letters, by telegrams and by personal calls and contacts that they support capital punishment for all premeditated murders. I sincerely believe the great majority of Canadians all across the country think the same way, and that opinion should be reflected in this House. There has been no hue and cry from Canadians to introduce a bill to abolish capital punishment, let alone Bill C-84. On the contrary, there is an open and very clear demand on the part of the vast majority of Canadians to enforce capital punishment not only for the slaying of policemen and prison guards but also for all premeditated murders.

● (1520)

There is no question in my mind that all the avowed statements and pleas about there being a free vote on this subject are a lot of hogwash. There has not been a free vote. It would be naive for any person to say that all members of parliament exercised a free vote without fear or the threat of being affected regarding their desire for promotion within the political party system. I have no hesitation in pointing out quite clearly that I have a free vote, and I am proud to vote freely on all matters. There is only one influence which affects my votes and decisions, and that is the collective majority of opinions and views of Canadians generally, in particular the collective majority of opinions and views of the citizens of the federal constituency of Moncton.

Quite frankly, if I, as a member of parliament, were to support Bill C-84 to abolish capital punishment, it seems to me that I would be sorely irresponsible and would be responsible for the slaying of future police officers, prison guards and citizens generally, because by supporting this bill I would be an accomplice before the fact.

Let us think about this very seriously. Those who support this bill are vested with a serious power of judgment and should vote uprightly and impartially without any personal consideration or consideration for the political party system. They must divest themselves of prejudice and preconception they might have because of the party system. They must not be motivated by stubborn pride of opinion, nor should they be too facile in yielding to the views and arguments of their fellow members of parliament.

I suggest that responsible members of parliament in a democratic system based upon democratic principles should be prepared to adhere to public opinion. Members of parliament are supposed to be responsible. We are supposed to be representatives of the people, not necessarily of a party. People should be first. As members of parliament we are representatives of and responsible to the people, and we should be a government and a parliament of the people, for the people and by the people.