

two clans when it came to the question of the principle of the bill on second reading. Were it not for that blackmailing, were it not for that fad the Prime Minister has to absolutely want to have that legislation passed, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the majority of the members of this House because of their personal interest and their role as genuine members of Parliament would truly reflect the thinking of the people in their ridings and consequently would vote for retaining capital punishment. So, Mr. Speaker, the game has been fouled and that is why the second reading did not truly reflect the opinion of my hon. colleagues in this House.

Tonight we have a chance to undo that, and this time, to move with the support of the majority of the people of Canada. Earlier, the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Marcéau) said that he had received only three replies in favour of the bill from his riding; I do not question that, because the people of his riding cannot get over the fact that he is going against the wishes, so they no longer want to have anything to do with him. That is very clear. For those three replies he mentions, I can show him over 8,000 I received from the riding of Champlain. Imagine 8,000 replies out of 16,000 questionnaires sent out! When 50 per cent of the people go to the trouble of writing their representative to indicate clearly and explicitly to him that they are in favour of something I would be very ill advised, Mr. Speaker, with an extremely scrupulous conscience, to say: How I hate to end the life of someone who has killed five or six children, or a poor old man, or a poor old lady! I hate to do it in my own conscience, I am shaking at the thought of that man being sentenced to die.

Mr. Speaker, that is utter ridicule since, as I said earlier, a person in full possession of his faculties who commits a capital murder, who decides at a given moment to kill, automatically decides also to have himself put to death. The decision was taken by him, not society. That is why I think we can therefore accept the principle of being against the fact that society has its revenge against an individual by committing exactly the same act for which the individual is blamed by that society. But this is not the case at all, I think.

From now, on we must say that we are no longer naive. I am not referring to those eleven people now sentenced to death. They were so sentenced in a system under which they were sure of not being hanged. Consequently they cannot be judged in that light, confident as they were because there had been no execution for more than ten or eleven years, I think. As a result, those who are now on death row were sure of not being hanged. We could say that after them, there might be some revision, that they should be sentenced to life imprisonment rather than do what the Prime Minister suggested—giving a show to all Canadians and send them all to the scaffold. No, of course!

Mr. Speaker, we will not give in to this kind of blackmailing on this side of the House, at least not the Social Credit members. We are not at all impressed by that because we consider that those individuals were convicted. Yes, they were convicted, but within a system where, for all practical purposes, abolition had been accepted. Now that it would be reinstated, that it would again take effect in a strict sense, we could say that from now on anyone who hangs would necessarily have decided so himself, and

### *Capital Punishment*

it would not be because society wants to exercise revenge, but simply because he has decided so. There is a distinction.

Therefore in my view the best way to do away with capital punishment is very simple, it is indeed very obvious, Mr. Speaker. Let no one commit murder. If there is no murder, then there is no capital punishment. It is just as easy as that. I have no qualm of conscience when I say to myself: Everybody has been warned; everybody knows what to expect. And I know that if I commit a murder of that kind, a premeditated murder, I deserve to hang. Every one will agree. Anyone who decides to commit murder has only himself to blame, not society, since it is he who has freely elected his course of action. He later will have to bear the consequences.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are completely justified to support the bill before us. This amendment gives all hon. members an opportunity to change their minds, all those who had been misled and blackmailed can straighten their views. Now is the time to review one's decision. I am now addressing myself especially to those who felt some compunction, and I am trying to prove to them that they need not let their conscience bother them. Let them simply say: As for me, I object to anyone being killed, I do not want at all that society take revenge on anyone. In that sense, I am against capital punishment. It is as easy to abolish it as to refrain from committing murders. Some people say: "We are smarter than anybody else". I even heard on the radio one member say that if he is a member of Parliament, it is because he is the most intelligent in his riding.

That is why he was sent here and, therefore, his opinion was worth much more than that of any other person in his riding, with a population of close to 90,000 or 100,000 inhabitants. His opinion is more important than that of his 100,000 constituents. Mr. Speaker, I would not have a clear conscience if I reasoned in this manner. I find that a reasoning which questions the very principle of democracy is worse than one which would restrain by every means someone who wants to be hanged. I find it is a good thing to respect public opinion, and if society is sick and there are murderers, I say that it is because it deserves it. If our present society, which is admittedly decadent and in which the level of morality is getting lower and lower, demands capital punishment, it is because it feels the need for it. I say therefore that it deserves it.

● (2040)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to continue?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matte:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank all my colleagues.

I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that I do not consider our role in the House to be holy nor do I think that we should take for granted that we want to establish a perfect society