

did so of his own volition, and I resent it and it confounds me to hear the comments I have just heard.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaker: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any difficulty with the intervention made by the hon. member and I respect that intervention. I did not suggest that the hon. member who presented this motion is doing so in some form of conspiracy or in some form of dishonourable presentation. I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. member presenting the motion did so in good faith and quite honestly, so far as I know.

An hon. Member: Speak to the motion.

Mr. Blaker: I am speaking to the motion. I make the assumption that the hon. member firmly believes that it is for the betterment of Canada that this particular motion be brought forward with respect to the death penalty. But the hon. member for Scarborough Centre (Mrs. Stratas) seems to think that I am accusing the government of some form of conspiracy, which I am not. What I do say—and if I had the particular quote in front of me, I would use it—is that the Prime Minister indicated during the election campaign that while he personally is opposed to the death penalty, he would be prepared to permit the bringing forward of private members' motions and bills in order that the House may decide.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You are not used to that.

Mr. Blaker: The hon. member is quite right, I am absolutely not used to that. I am accustomed to a party, and I have one to my right and one to my left, which has some concept that we stand on principle. I have yet to see the indication of the Prime Minister of Canada who has voted against the hanging bill and spoken against it and who then campaigns on the idea that there is an undercurrent of promise that, despite his own stand on capital punishment, he is prepared to see that same bill go through the House. There are a few examples of debate in Canada of greater moral attachment, philosophy and concept, but on this issue the Prime Minister stands before the House and the people of Canada and says that, while he voted against capital punishment, he is prepared to comply with a private member's bill which will allow his own views to be overruled. It is a cop-out, that is what it is.

● (1620)

An hon. Member: It is a game.

Mr. Blaker: Just let me be very clear about this. This is not the first time that this governing party and this Prime Minister have done the same thing. I am one of the members who stood up in the House of Commons and asked the Prime Minister to lead in the issue of Canadian national unity, and he collapsed on that as well. It is a regular collapse.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Capital Punishment

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Mrs. Stratas) on a point of order.

Mrs. Stratas: Mr. Speaker, I only suggest that perhaps the member opposite does not understand the freedom of speech concept and the parliamentary system as our Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) and we understand it. I put in a plea for relevance to the issue which is the private member's bill, rather than a personality debate.

An hon. Member: Speak to the bill.

Mr. Blaker: Yes, I will speak to the bill.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): It is a motion.

Mr. Blaker: I will speak to the motion, then. There is a very clear understanding here. For one of the first times of which I know in the seven years I have been in the House of Commons, it is proposed to use some of the advantages of certain procedures in order to bootleg in a bill which the Prime Minister of Canada and the governing party of Canada do not have the guts to put before the House in a normal fashion. That is the problem.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaker: If I have to put it any clearer, or if I have to put it in simpler words, it is an act of cowardice.

Mr. Taylor (Bow River): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): The hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) must return to his seat to be recognized. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Kilgour).

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry; I was not standing up to speak.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: It has been a long day.

Mr. Blaker: Mr. Speaker, I am getting somewhat dizzy going up and down. May I finish?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): The hon. member for Bow River on a point of order.

Mr. Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) does not tell us how to vote, like the hon. member's prime minister did in the last cabinet.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles: Has any one of these points of order been a point of order?

Some hon. Members: No.