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Abbott now unsure about abolition

Mississauga - Federal Constituency

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At a Town Hall meeting Monday night, Mississauga MP, Tony Abbott, indicated his concern about the "even chance that we'll be back to capital punishment" after Parliament votes on the issue later this month.

A professed abolitionist, a stand which he took during his election campaign, Abbott nonetheless said that at the moment he does not know whether he will vote in favor of abolition.

"It depends largely on how the bill is introduced," he told the 15 constituents who came to the meeting.

Abbott explained that the legislation on capital punishment will be but one part of a "peace and security" package, expected to be introduced in the House on Feb. 24.

The package, he said, would most likely contain a major overhaul of the bail reform system, gun control as well as a variety of measures geared to the security of society. He also expected that the bill

would propose abolition of capital punishment to be replaced by stiff sentences for murder with a minimum of 25 years for first degree murder.

Abbott said he doubted the possibility of a referendum on the issue, saying that in all its history, Canada has had but one referendum on the conscription issue in 1943.

Answering a question on the government's

wage and price controls, Abbott said in the budget to be brought down in May, some indication will be given about how effective the program has been and how much longer controls will be imposed.

"I, along with a number of my colleagues, believe the 18-month time limit to be a reasonable one," he said. "Controls imposed for too long a period tend to become indispensable after a while."