

study criminal law, the more convinced I am of this: the public is possessed of the idea of revenge upon the man who commits murder, and that is the only reason why his life is kept in him—in order that he may be reserved for the gallows. For if it were only a question of getting rid of the criminal he might just as well be allowed to die peacefully of his own accord. Two things govern us: first, society should be protected; second, the individual should be punished. I go a little farther and say that the criminal should be given an opportunity to reform. No man has the right to say to what length of time that opportunity should be extended. Do we, by hanging a man, protect society? Most certainly we do. Would punishment of another kind protect society just as well? On this point there is a great difference of opinion. I have given some study to the question during the years I have been in public life, and before. I have seen how many countries, one by one, have abolished capital punishment. I am not at all surprised at the figures read by my hon. friend to-day, because I am firmly convinced that capital punishment is no greater deterrent than life imprisonment, and I think the experience of the countries that have done away with hanging fully bears me out in that.

Now, as to the punishment of the individual. I would not go so far as my hon. friend from Frontenac (Mr. Edwards) and say that imprisonment is a greater punishment than hanging, but I do believe that imprisonment is as thorough a punishment as hanging. It is only a matter of degree anyway, and only those who have had the experience could give an absolute answer. For the purposes of society, a man is punished just as thoroughly by imprisonment as by hanging, and history shows that criminals consider it just as great a punishment. Some dread it even more than execution.

I shall possibly be called a sentimentalist for the remarks I shall make as to the reclamation of criminals. I know it is much more popular to say, "Away with him; he killed somebody, so he ought to be killed," than to intimate that the criminal might possibly be reclaimed and made a good citizen. I believe that no product of the Creator's handiwork but has some good in him. In most cases the surroundings of an individual in his youth have a great deal to do with his after-life. But, I repeat, I am a firm believer that there is in every man an element of good which can be de-

[Mr. Graham.]

veloped and fructified if found and properly nurtured. If it be true that society is protected as thoroughly by imprisonment as by hanging, and that imprisonment is a sufficient punishment, you do not by imprisonment deprive the individual of the opportunity of being reclaimed and made what the Creator intended he should be made, in a measure at least—a respectable man, before he is called to pass from this life. By capital punishment we say: "You must die on a certain day, and, in the words of the judge, may the Lord have mercy on your soul." We undertake, as a human agency, to give a man so many days to get ready for heaven, and if he cannot then he takes the consequences. We have no right to take that position, and I do not think we protect society any more by doing it. I do not believe that we punish the individual any more, and we do take from him every opportunity that he would otherwise have, perhaps during the long years of imprisonment, of becoming a man again and of making himself right in so far as possible with his fellow men in this world and with his Creator in the eternity that is before him. I go as far as my hon. friend goes in saying that I do not believe that any human being under any guise of law, under any statute that he may invoke, has the right to step in and assume the prerogative of the Creator himself and take life, with the giving of which he has had nothing to do. This may be a sentiment, but it is a sentiment I strongly entertain. I entertain it conscientiously, and so long as I am in this House I shall vote for the abolition of capital punishment, because I believe it is wrong and affords no protection to society.

Mr. G. W. KYTE (Richmond, N.S.): I was not present when this Bill was discussed on a former occasion, but the grounds I take for opposing the Bill are as sincere as the sentiments that have prompted the hon. member for St. Lawrence, Montreal (Mr. Bickerdike), to propose this legislation. It speaks well for his humanity and his philanthropic disposition that he should present this legislation to the House. His description of execution by form of law as being legalized murder has its counterpart in another obligation which rests upon the Government in respect to the raising of revenue for carrying on the affairs of the country. I have heard in days past a certain form of taxation described as being legalized robbery, in the same way as the hon. member for St. Lawrence, Montreal,