

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

issue with them personally but because they are senior members of their party and indeed senior members of the house. I felt that these gentlemen would have some very valid points to make. The hon. member for Bow River is one of the more respected representatives of the legal profession in the house, and the hon. member for Northumberland is a former cabinet member as well as occupying a prominent role in his party.

Running through the remarks of the hon. member for Northumberland were two main themes. The first was the danger to society of convicted murderers when the time came for them to regain their freedom through the medium of the parole board. I am sure the hon. member was quite sincere last night when he emphasized the grave dangers to which society was exposed by the parole of convicted murderers. He pointed out how inefficient we are in Canada—I have to agree with this latter point—in our methods of rehabilitating criminals. The hon. member referred to the small number of psychiatrists and psychologists available for rehabilitation work. Time and time again he emphasized that until we come up with better methods of rehabilitation we should not change our laws in such a way that murderers would eventually regain a place in society.

● (3:20 p.m.)

What puzzled me, Mr. Speaker, was that in effect he was saying, let us kill these people so we will protect society from the potential danger which they represent if they regain their freedom. This reasoning, of course, is very impressive. It impressed me deeply to the point where I obtained from the minister's department certain statistics. I know people say, oh, statistics, but I must emphasize that these statistics are simple, comprehensive and easy to follow. These are the only statistics I intend to quote today. They concern the number of people who have been paroled in Canada, never mind other countries, since 1920. I do not believe anybody can disagree that these figures are easily obtainable from the records of federal, provincial and municipal governments. It may be of interest to know that 122 convicted murderers have been paroled in Canada since 1920. Of the 122, only seven have had their parole revoked; six forfeited their parole; 13 have died; six voluntarily left the country or were deported; 90 are still on parole.

The significant thing, Mr. Speaker, is that this potential threat to society, of which the

hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Hees) spoke very eloquently and sincerely last night, has resulted in but two murders out of the 122 criminals who were released on parole over a period of 45 years. This very telling fact cannot simply be dismissed because it is a statistic. It is not something that we can say is juggled or interpreted in a particular way by an advocate of retention or an advocate of abolition. It is simply a cold, stark fact that 122 convicted murderers were released, only two of whom have recommitted the crime of murder.

The other point the hon. member for Northumberland made, with which of course I most heartily agree, dealt with the need for better rehabilitation facilities. Perhaps if time permits I will be able to support his argument later on in my speech. The hon. member read into the record last night a report that appeared in the *Toronto Star* about an innocent merchant who was shot down in cold blood. He made no attempt of course to relate that slaying with any of the 122 people who have been paroled; nor did he attempt to say that the killer in this case was necessarily one of the 90 people on parole.

I can imagine the shock of people in Toronto, Mr. Speaker, particularly the shock of this unfortunate man's neighbours, because less than three years ago a personal friend of mine, one with whom I had gone fishing on many occasions, a man who was a member of a club to which I belong—there are less than 25 of us—likewise an innocent merchant who ran a grocery store in the city of Verdun, was crossing the street on a Saturday evening to deposit the week's receipts in the outside depository which some banks make available to their customers and, as he reached down and put the key in the lock mechanism, the door of a car that had been standing at the corner opened. A young hoodlum ran out and shot the man, and he died on the spot. Then the young hoodlum picked up the bag of money and left the scene to be caught incidentally a few months later.

This incident gave me great cause for reflection, Mr. Speaker, because essentially I was then and still am in favour of abolition. This was an emotional experience for me because he was not just a mere acquaintance but a very close friend. I received many letters from my constituents after the last debate asking me how I could justify my voting for abolition, in view of this horrible event that had taken place in my riding.