

### Oral Questions

procedures and facilitating the way in which our courts are handling matters is before us and before provincial attorneys general, who have a good deal of responsibility in this area. I am confident that we can make progress in improving our legal and rehabilitation processes without taking the easy way out of suggesting that simply being tough and keeping everyone in jail all the time is really the solution to these problems.

#### REASON FOR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCES FOR CAPITAL MURDER

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I would not want to associate myself with that answer given by the Attorney General of Canada. I only asked for an investigation into the causes of increased crime, because under the Diefenbaker administration crime did not increase. As police morale is low and as shoot-outs by police officers may become a fact of life, as officers want to protect their own lives, will the Minister of Justice tell the House what is the criteria or formula which has enabled the cabinet to commute since 1968 nine sentences of death to life imprisonment. I am speaking of capital murder convictions resulting from the murder of police officers or prison guards. I should like the answer of the Minister of Justice to be different from the verbiage I hear from the Solicitor General, who says that each case is considered on its merits, as nobody accepts such answers as creditable.

• (1520)

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's figure is wrong if he is relating it to the period since 1968. There have been four or five commutations in the period to which he refers. This, of course, has been done in accordance with the law which parliament was very conscious of in last approving an extension to the particular form of capital punishment we have in this country. In other words, it very carefully left the obligation to consider mercy on the cabinet. The hon. member knows that each such case is very carefully considered on its own merits, each one individually, as is the obligation.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I ask the Minister of Justice to check the figures which were given in *Hansard* in answer to a written question. If I recall properly, eight of the commutations were for murders of police officers and one of a guard. Those figures are in *Hansard*. They were supplied by the Solicitor General. In view of the fact we cannot get any facts or honest answers from this government, I ask for a royal commission.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I take it that the hon. member is suggesting that the minister has given an incorrect or an inaccurate answer and alternatively suggesting that the minister check the facts and figures. Perhaps the minister can reply to the hon. member at some other time in light of that answer.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a further question of privilege. My friends in the back benches from the province of Quebec only went along with the bill on

[Mr. Lang.]

capital punishment because they were told there would be capital punishment when people were found guilty of murder of police officers and guards. That is why they are grumbling, yelling and shouting.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

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#### CANADA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

##### REASON FOR TRANSFER OF INTEREST IN TEXASGULF TO NETHERLANDS SUBSIDIARY

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that the Canada Development Corporation was established to assist in the creation of businesses, resource properties and industries in Canada and to provide a vehicle for Canadians to invest in the economic development of Canada, will the minister indicate why the Canada Development Corporation felt it necessary to transfer its 30 per cent interest in Texasgulf to a newly incorporated Netherlands subsidiary for a value \$20 million less than the cost of such investment to CDC?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, parliament gave the Canada Development Corporation discretion in its internal management. However, I am advised there is no loss of tax revenue for Canada in the arrangement.

**Mr. Stevens:** In view of the minister's indication that there is no loss of tax revenue to Canada, and as it is well known that the Netherlands is a country often used in tax avoidance schemes, will the minister indicate if this move was in fact made to avoid tax and, if so, what tax is it hoped CDC will avoid?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the preamble in that the Netherlands has a favourable tax treaty with Canada and there is a friendly relationship with this country.

**Mr. Stevens:** Whether the minister accepts my preamble or not, will he indicate whether the move was made as part of a tax avoidance scheme?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** In so far as the Canadian authorities are concerned, Mr. Speaker, my answer is no.

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#### REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

##### FAILURE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA TO RECEIVE INCENTIVE GRANTS—PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR DESIGNATED AREAS

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In light of the latest report on incentive grants issued in Canada which was published in October 1974, it appears that \$13 million was expended in Quebec, \$7 million in the rest of Canada and none in the province