

said: The object of this Bill is to do away entirely with the death penalty in this country and to substitute therefor a life sentence; and, in addition, to provide for the use of the lash in certain cases. I think the time has come when we should deal with this question, and deal with it fairly and honestly. The death penalty, as I said when I introduced the Bill, is a blot on Christendom, a blight on religion, and a reproach to the civilized nation that allowed it on its statute books. If we look for a moment at the results of capital punishment as administered, not only here but the world over, we find that if a man commits murder and he is very wealthy, he is adjudged insane, and saves his neck. If he is fairly wealthy, he can employ sufficient counsel to get commutation of sentence, but if he is a poor man with no friends and with no influence, he goes to the gallows. To me, it seems a terrible thing that the poor man should get the full effect of the law, and be hanged by the neck until he is dead and his soul ushered into eternity. It is true the State says the man is not fit to live, but I say this, Mr. Speaker, if he is not fit to live, is the State prepared to say that he is fit to die? The State says: Away with him, hang him, he is not fit for this world; but I ask the State: Are you quite sure he is fit for the next. I say that a man who is not fit for earth is not fit for heaven. Furthermore, capital punishment is against the law of God. The great Geometrician of the Universe says in the Ten Commandments: Thou shalt not kill, and I claim that that commandment applies to the State just as much as to the individual. But the State says: Oh probably; He did not mean that, and so, we will legislate the word 'not' out of that commandment. To me, Sir, capital punishment becomes then nothing short of legalized murder. Quite a number of people, as hon. gentlemen in this House know, say that capital punishment is a deterrent of crime, but I have some of the best authorities, I think, in the world, including the best statesmen that England ever produced, among others John Bright, to prove that the death penalty is not a deterrent, and never was, to even murderously disposed criminals. To my mind, nothing is more degrading to society at large in a Christian land than the death penalty, and let it not be forgotten that we in degrading become degraded, and that society in degrading becomes degraded. I claim that the Lord gives life and the Lord alone has the right

to take it. We have no moral right to destroy that which we cannot restore. We do not punish the criminals alone but we brand his children to the fourth and fifth generation with the brand of Cain. I might say that in my opinion no man commits murder in his sane moments; in fact, a great many of the very best medical authorities state emphatically, that a person perpetrating murder is insane at the moment that he commits the deed. The old and barbarous death penalty is fast dying out in all Christian lands. No hon. member of this House who believes in the Creator, will dare to vote in favour of this legalized murder by the State. What does the State do? This Government, and I do not blame this Government any more than its predecessors, makes a compact with the legalized, licensed, executioner, for a money consideration, to drag our fellowman to the scaffold, to send his body to the grave and his soul into eternity. Think of it—that a Government could descend to the depth that it would make a contract to have a fellow creature ushered into eternity in consideration of a bonus of thirty pieces of silver.

Mr. HENDERSON: What about the judge who sentences him?

Mr. BICKERDIKE: There are, I know, differences of opinion in different countries, as to crime. In England, the greatest crime is murder, for which hanging is the penalty. In Russia, they do not hang for murder, but for political reasons. I think there are men in Canada to-day who can remember certain young men who were hanged here for so-called political crimes. If any hon. members of this House will take the trouble when in Montreal, to go to the Catholic cemetery, they will see engraved on a splendid monument the names of many young Canadians who were legally murdered after the events of the Rebellion of 1837. It was not confined entirely to Montreal or to Quebec; the same thing happened in Toronto where, Matthews and Lount, two of the finest young men Ontario ever produced, supporters of Lyon Mackenzie, were condemned to death and hanged. There is no question in my mind but that that, more especially in view of our present enlightenment, was declared murder. It created such a revulsion of feeling, in Upper and Lower Canada, a feeling which spread across the water, to the throne of Queen Victoria, that for twenty years, from 1838 to 1858, no Government of Canada would allow a man to be hanged. There