

*Criminal Injuries Compensation Board*

him to Kingston so he could learn a trade. The taxpayers of Canada are giving this chap an education while he is in Kingston penitentiary in expiation of his crime. What is the federal government doing for the innocent victims of that crime, the widow and children?

I think also of a milkman in Port Credit in the riding of Peel who was endeavouring to collect an amount owing the dairy for which he worked. He had called three or four times at this particular household where there was a small bill outstanding. This milkman was going about his normal work and an ex-boxer, who was the tenant in the house, the person owing the bill, came out of the house and hit him so hard he died. One might say, well, no doubt the milkman's widow and children receive some workmen's compensation from the province of Ontario, because he was engaged in the performance of his duty. I do not know whether the province of Ontario has stepped into the breach and now pays the widow something under workmen's compensation, but if he was working on commission, as many of these salesmen on milk and bread routes do, it may be that the widow is not getting anything from workmen's compensation.

In any event, why should a widow in a case of this nature, whose husband has been killed by a criminal, have to rely on the small sums paid out under workmen's compensation? Supposing this had been a self-employed farmer who had been killed; how would his widow collect, and from whom? This question of compensation for innocent victims of criminal acts should have top priority, and this federal cabinet should be considering the question today—not whether to abolish capital punishment.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) in introducing his bill for the abolition of capital punishment—because that is what it amounts to; the cabinet will commute all the sentences of anybody who kills a policeman or prison guard—referred to New Zealand. I am very glad he referred to New Zealand because probably he has read some of the laws of New Zealand. I wonder whether he has read about that great forerunner of this type of legislation which was first introduced in the Dominion of New Zealand some years ago. In New Zealand the federal government makes compensation to the innocent victims of criminal acts on the basis that it is the right and duty of the state to protect all its

[Mr. Cowan.]

citizens; and when the state falls down, as is the case when innocent people are suffering because of criminal acts and the state is not giving the necessary protection to innocent souls, the state must pay.

This type of legislation should be on the statute books of Canada. I tell you that there is not a single, solitary more important question in the Dominion of Canada today. I am 65 years of age, and I know that lawyers stand up—they have been standing up all my life and doing this—and say: Oh, think about provincial responsibility, worry about federal responsibility. This is done just so they can put the responsibility on somebody else.

When the murderer is convicted and sentenced to be hanged, the cabinet steps in and, out of their all-pervading mercy, says: We will commute this sentence. I say, don't forget that the taxpayers of Canada are paying for three meals a day, a warm bed, recreational facilities and training facilities for the murderer. When we, the people who worry about the fate of innocent victims, say "You should supply compensation to these victims", what are we met with? Then it is said: Oh, it is a provincial responsibility, the federal cabinet cannot interfere. But the federal cabinet will feed the criminal three times a day, give him warm surroundings, recreational facilities and education. Their attitude is: To hell with the family of the innocent victim.

We have to follow the example set for us by New Zealand and Great Britain. I was fortunate enough a year or so ago to make a trip to Europe with the war veterans committee of the House of Commons. The chairman of that committee, my very good friend the hon. member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel), will tell you that when he asked whether I intended to accompany the committee to Europe I said to him: "Mr. Chairman, when I am in London I will not see the committee. I am going to talk to the officials of the compensation board about the compensation of innocent victims of criminal acts."

When that committee was in London—it spent three days in London out of the 17 days on that trip overseas—I never saw the war veterans committee because I was closeted with the officials of the compensation board, asking about the compensation of innocent victims of criminal acts. An interesting thing occurred during those three days in London. On the front page of the *London Times*, in dead centre, which is about as prominent a position as you can get, other