

Other cases are reported where hanging did not bring about death and the man was put on the scaffold and hanged over again. Another one was twitching some twenty minutes afterwards and the hangman had to pull on the body to strangle the man, who was simply choked to death. Hon. members need not be told about the disgraceful happening in Montreal where a woman's head was torn from her body, which fell into the yard, and a minute or so afterwards the head fell down. This was a very repulsive spectacle.

The first time I approached this question was as a boy some forty years ago. At that time we were allowed to see the hangings, which we thought were wonderful. The sight was so repulsive that I was most anxious that some day I should get a chance to speak against that method of putting people to death.

In the last nine years we have had one hundred and twenty executions in Canada, and in the ten years before that we had ninety-two. It is needless to speak of the cost, which is between \$700 and \$800 each, but hon. members will understand that the other method would save thousands of dollars to the country. However that is a very weak argument. This is another; I think this was sent to the court:

I had the painful duty as attorney of witnessing the execution of Mrs. Sarao. I desire to bring to your attention the horrible fact that the body of Mrs. Sarao was completely severed from her head and crashed into the yard below. A few seconds later the head fell on the ground a few feet from the body.

There are present at the hanging the coroner, the executioner, and the sheriff. I need not give the house the views of a coroner; I have been a coroner for many years, and I would hate to say what coroners say about lawyers in regard to hanging. With all due respect to my legal friends, they are more accustomed to give advice than to receive it, and when they want to know how to put a man to death they send for a carpenter. Why did they not consult the doctors about how to put a man to death? But they send for a couple of carpenters, who build a scaffold and tie a man with a rope, throw him down and break his neck. For the last two thousand years medical men could easily have told how the death penalty could be carried out in much better ways. What we have in our land today is as bad as the cruellest form of Indian barbarism. People can hardly realize this, but if you are present at one or two cases you will see what the legislation of your country is responsible for.

[Mr. Blair.]

This is a line from our hangman, Arthur Ellis. He is writing to Mr. Lawrason who sent this to me. Mr. Ellis is in favour of abolishing the present way of hanging. He is also in favour of centralizing executions. It is dreadful that people in small towns and villages can hear the building of the scaffold on which one of their neighbours is to be hanged. Children on their way to school see it. I shall never forget my sensations when I saw a man hanged. The first impulse is that you must go and help; the second is one of antagonism to constituted authority; the spectacle arouses resentment in the minds of the people. I do not believe in encouraging that resentment.

Hon. members will remember Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables* in which he pictures the vindictiveness of the law. The law should not be vindictive. The law's purpose is to prevent the repetition of wrong by the person convicted or by others; its purpose is not primarily to punish; it looks to the future, and the vindictiveness of the law and of Javert in that story as shown in the theatres gives an entirely wrong idea of the spirit of the law. This is a relic of barbarism. May I say to my legal friends that they, like the Chinese, have a tendency to worship the gods of antiquity. People throughout the country write me letters asking me to press this bill through, and I have had sent to me editorial after editorial. The people are anxious, but the lawyers have that tendency to worship antiquity; if you give a lawyer something that he can refer back to, he does not have to think; he can read. The tendency of lawyers is always to revert to an old precedent. Once I asked a lawyer's advice and he went back to James I. I said, "Thank heaven, our earliest history is traditional." But aside from that I say that this hanging practice is the worst relic of antiquity that we have. I am more in sympathy with the Indians, who used to let a man run and take a drive at him when he passed; he had a chance, at any rate. We have gone too far back in having this barbarism in our law. The whole country is opposed to it, and I am sure that the people will be grateful to this government if they pass this bill.

Now, there are many articles expressing the same opinion. Arthur Ellis denounces the present method very strongly throughout this letter, which I do not think I should read. This is an observation by Mr. Lawrason, the sheriff in Hamilton for Wentworth county:

History shows that in mediæval days the intention expressed in executing the death penalty was to make it appear as cruel as