

That has not worked out at all; and I believe that one of the greatest advances we have had in this country on the line of social and moral uplift is brought about by the more humane and generous way in which these men are treated. Their crimes, of course, are not of as deep a dye as murder is—that must be admitted but they are starting along the pathway of crime, and whether they shall be reformed and become better citizens, or go on to worse crimes depends largely, I believe, upon the way they are treated in the early stages of their criminal career. I just point to that as a reform which seems to me of great significance, and which was opposed very strongly and laughed at, at first. As a member of the Ontario Government—for a very short time, I admit—it was my duty to look into the question of removing the Central Prison from the city of Toronto and placing it somewhere outside. That whole thing has developed, and now we find men who are committed to prison for short terms—I believe that those committed to provincial institutions are sentenced for less than two years—are placed on prison farms and given a good deal of latitude; and I have yet to learn of any bad results from the adoption of that course. It is too late now for any extended remarks, but my point is that the condition of mankind is so different, even criminality is so different, in this age compared with what it was centuries ago, that if we are to obtain the same results, we must change our method of treatment. I believe that the statistics of those states in which capital punishment has been abolished will show that the crime of murder has not increased. It is contended, in fact, and I think with a good deal of accuracy, that murder has decreased. Still, that might be due to other causes, and it is sufficient for my argument if it has not increased, for it means that capital punishment has not proved a greater deterrent of crime than some milder forms of punishment. I believe that life imprisonment is as certain a deterrent as capital punishment, and it has the advantage pointed out by my hon. friend (Mr. Bickerdike) of leaving an opportunity of remedying a possible wrong. I am not prepared to admit that many legal wrongs are committed. I believe that many moral wrongs are committed, but in the vast majority of cases the alleged criminal has a fair trial, and suffers as he should, by statute. But there is something also that appeals to me more strongly, and that is that one object that we must all have in

mind is to offer opportunities for the man, no matter how far we think he has fallen, to repent and turn his face towards good-citizenship. With capital punishment, we do not leave any opportunity for that. A man is given so many weeks or so many months, but he is absolutely precluded from the possibility of ever mingling again with his fellow men, and so one great incentive to a reformed life is taken away. The first great object, I submit, is the protection of society. But the second object should be the reform of the individual, and the improvement of society. By the carrying out of capital punishment, we preclude that to a large extent. I have been greatly impressed with the work of societies engaged in the work of reforming men who have not only been accused but convicted and sentenced. There are associations who take hold of these men after they come out of the institutions and give them an opportunity to make their way back to good-citizenship as rapidly as possible—and all that, as I say, is precluded by capital punishment.

Of course, this is a big question, one upon which great differences of opinion exist. But the subject has been discussed and acted upon by so many states of the American Union and so many countries of the world that I think the time has come for us to refer it to a committee of able men for thorough investigation and report to Parliament. I am fully convinced that before many years we in this Parliament will be united as one man for a great reform along this line, going even as far as the abolition of capital punishment. I would like to see this referred to an able committee, as I have said, who should be given plenty of time to look into the working of the law in those countries in which the death penalty has been abolished, and then let them bring in their mature considerations and recommendations as to what should be done. It is a big question, with many sides, to it, and what we want is the enactment and execution of laws having for their object the best for the people of the entire country.

Hon. C. J. DOHERTY (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the subject is not a new one in this House; the hon. member for St. Lawrence (Mr. Bickerdike) introduced this measure in a previous session. At that time I had occasion to express at some length the views I entertained upon the proposed Bill. Though I have listened with attention to what has been said by that hon. gentleman and also by the hon. member for South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) I cannot say that the views I then expressed