

public executions were abolished, and so brutalizing upon officials that the man who acts as public hangman becomes a public outcast. No doubt the House will remember the conversion of Radcliffe, the hangman, which was published in the Maritime Baptist of 9th October, 1912. Criminologists all agree that the certainty, and not the severity, of the punishment is the deterrent of crime. Jurists to-day hesitate to convict; some Ministers of Justice hesitate to recommend that the death sentence be carried out; some Governors in Council to-day hesitate to sanction hanging. Evidence from countries where capital punishment has been abolished shows that murders have decreased, and not increased, as a result. Punishment, I claim, should be reformatory and not vindictive. And how can a man be reformed when he is hurried into eternity without time for repentance. We live to-day under the gentle rule of the Gospel, and I claim that according to that Gospel we have no license to have capital punishment.

Henry VIII of England sought to repress criminal tendencies by prescribing the death penalty for the most trivial offenses, such as theft and poaching, and by making a public spectacle of every execution inflicted in pursuance of law. During his reign of twenty years the death-cart bearing condemned men rumbled almost daily through the public streets to the gibbet, and the total number of executions reached the appalling figure of 72,000. Of this number not less than 70,000 were executed for larceny. Notwithstanding the severity and the publicity of the penalties applied, property rights were never as insecure in England as they were during the reign of Henry VIII, while other crimes flourished proportionately. Instances are recorded, moreover, where many people, who viewed these executions conducted so liberally by England's most bloodthirsty King, were later convicted of capital crimes, notwithstanding their opportunity to witness daily the infliction of the most severe punishment upon other offenders. In fact, the entire abandonment in recent years of public executions in this country, as in others, must be attributed directly to the realization upon the part of the people that applications of the death penalty in city squares, or court house yards, have had the opposite effect from that which they were intended to produce.

During last session, when this question was being discussed, I drew attention to the

case of a man who had been hanged in British Columbia for the shooting of a policeman whom he did not shoot. I claim that capital punishment and the Christian religion can no longer march shoulder to shoulder. We have come to the parting of the ways; the death penalty and Christianity can no longer go hand in hand. The hon. Minister of Justice, on the occasion to which I refer, claimed that it was the law of the land; that the man was found in bad company, and, according to the law, was equally liable as the man who did the shooting. The right hon. leader of the Opposition concurred in this view. When two such eminent jurists agree on a question of law, I would not dare to call it in question, but the fact remains that this man was hanged for killing a man that he did not kill. It may be the law, but if it is, it is a bad law, and should be immediately erased from our criminal code. I am sure, Sir, that the world is much better to-day owing to the fact that the law was not always in force. If it had been we would have been deprived of one of the greatest missionary preachers that the world ever possessed. Why, Sir, if such a law had been in force in the early days the great Apostle Paul himself would have been hanged for assisting at the murder of the martyr St. Stephen.

In the British Columbia case the Minister of Justice read the man's heart, searched his soul, pierced the secret chambers of his mind, and says that he went out with murder in his heart. He found the man bad, all bad, and ordered him hanged; and I wish to give the Minister of Justice credit that he is manly enough to take credit for his action in this case, and not only to take credit for it, but to make a boast for having done so. He is evidently proud of it. Nevertheless, this man's soul was ushered into eternity because he was poor. The Minister of Justice will agree with me that if that man had been wealthy he might not have been hanged.

Mr. DOHERTY: Most assuredly not. I am sure that the hon. member has no conception of the gravity of what he is saying. After stating that I did this, he says that it was done because the man was poor. I think that if the hon. gentleman will give the matter a moment's thought, he will surely change that statement.

M. BICKERDIKE: There is one thing that I am positive about: that men are being hanged in Canada to-day because they are poor, and for no other reason.