

Everyone knows that that has not been done for many centuries and it is false representation to bring forth such arguments.

People speak of judicial errors, some of which have been quoted. But everybody knows that, today, criminals are hanged for capital murder only, that is for murders that have been proved without any doubt. Why then speak of judicial errors?

The hon. Registrar General of Canada (Mr. Turner) said that the legal or judicial system or the legislation are deficient and that even the judges would need to complete their education. Therefore, let them complete their education, but do not free criminals while waiting for the law to be improved and for the judges to learn how to deal with the cases that come before them.

• (5:00 p.m.)

It has been said among other things that public opinion favours abolition. I say that it is untrue, I say that if a referendum were held throughout Canada today the vast majority of Canadians would oppose abolition of the death penalty. In fact, I know that several of my colleagues tried in their ridings the experiment I carried out in mine, that is to day they sent a questionnaire to their electors to find out what public opinion was and the great majority was in favour of retaining the death penalty.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members should educate the people. I think that is true but we should wait until the people have been educated before foisting on them measures they do not want. We have been sent here to serve the people and to comply with their wishes. Now, if it is deemed advisable to abolish the death penalty, let us start by educating the people and make them understand the reasons for its abolition, but let us not abolish the death penalty without educating the public beforehand.

I was surprised to hear the arguments put forward by the member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette), because, at first, he was in favour of the bill and then, he was against it. He admitted, nevertheless, that public opinion was not ready to accept the abolition of the death penalty.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I say that this bill is unacceptable, because when one argues for the respect of human life to demand that 4 or 5 criminals not be hanged every year and that two or three be hanged for having

#### *Amendments Respecting Death Sentence*

killed peace officers, I find it a rather unexplainable ambiguousness that the Registrar General failed to clear up when he said: Those are people who commit, to a certain extent, crimes against the state.

Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) were murdered, or the Solicitor General, or the member for Lotbinière, or the chairman of the house, that would be a crime against the state. It seems to me the persons found guilty of the crime would deserve hanging every bit as much as the murderer of a prison guard who, in many cases, is uneducated. The argument is, therefore, contradictory; I dare not say misleading because I have too much respect for the hon. members and the hon. ministers who have advanced such an argument here. But if the concern for human lives is so great, so dear to the heart of all the members of this government, why then has an unanimous, eloquent and vigorous protest not been organized in this house in recent months against the wars which are killing thousands of people in some countries of the world?

At a time when Canada is accused of selling the United States arms that are used to kill the Vietnamese, why did we not raise a general protest? I am sure that the government would have had the support of all members to protest against mass killing of innocent people to satisfy questionable interests which I have no time to discuss at this point.

If the concern over the protection of human lives is so deep, let it first start by stopping these killings. On the other hand, if these cannot be stopped, let a protest rise strong enough, eloquent enough, unanimous enough to awake world conscience to this series of crime, implied in wars now being waged mostly against civilians.

I feel that if it is out of concern for the sacredness of human life that an effort is made to save two or three murderers each year, while continuing to hang two or three who kill guards, while letting thousands of civilians be massacred in unexplainable and absolutely unacceptable wars. There is something wrong somewhere, Mr. Speaker. I think it should be the responsibility of this house, in order to maintain Canada in its mission as peace-maker in the world, to maintain the respect of the smaller nations, precisely to