

I want my good friend opposite to listen to this.

This is what Cromwell said about a parliament, and it could be applied to the Conservative members of this parliament as it comes to its unlamented end:

"You have sat there too long for the little good that you do. It is time to make way for better men. In the name of God—go".

That is what the Prime Minister told us, Mr. Speaker. We are now back once more arguing the same matter and they are asking parliament to decide again on a matter that was decided less than 18 months ago. Therefore I should like to ask the government why this subject is a priority item, and I ask them to give me an answer to that question.

In effect we have abolition of capital punishment now so we do not have to get worked up about the situation. We are experiencing an economic debacle in this country and this government does nothing about it. Adopting the Prime Minister's words, Mr. Speaker, when he quoted Cromwell—"In the name of God—go".

I now direct my attention in the few moments left to me to the subject before us.

**Mr. Brewin:** About time.

**Mr. Woolliams:** This matter has already been debated. If hon. members want to know what I said on the previous occasion then let me refer them to my speech of 18 months ago, to the minister's speech and to all the other speeches that are reported in *Hansard*. We have already had a debate on the matter and we are now duplicating that debate.

I agree with the minister that this is a very difficult subject, that we are facing a challenge from crime in a free society. I should like to refer to the latest report of the President's commission that was set up in the United States to study law enforcement. As the minister says, we can always draw on various circumstances in other countries, and I should like to quote what that commission had to say about capital punishment. Crime is on the march, and the question we have to decide is: Should we abolish capital punishment for offences of treason; should we abolish capital punishment for repeaters—this problem has arisen in this country—should we abolish capital punishment for syndicated gangsters who murder for profit and make money out of the demise of our citizens?

These are tough questions, Mr. Speaker. Crime in the United States, as in Canada, is on the move, and I will refer to some statistics later. The President's commission, as

*Amendments Respecting Death Sentence* found on page 143 of their report, had this to say:

As the abolition or the retention of the death penalty is being widely debated in the states, it is appropriate to point out several aspects of its administration that bear on the issue.

The most salient characteristic of capital punishment is that it is infrequently applied.

So the same situation prevails there as it has in Canada for some time.

I should like to refer to some statistics. From January 1, 1951 to June 30, 1957 there were 90 cases of convicted murderers who were given the death penalty. Fifty five executions were carried out and the remaining 35 had their sentence commuted. From July 1, 1957 to April 15, 1963 there were 66 cases, 14 executions and 52 commutations. From April 16, 1963 to September 30, 1967—this was about the time when the offence of murder was divided into capital and non-capital murder—there were 27 convictions in cases of murder but none received the death penalty because the sentences were all commuted. This proves that we already have a *de facto* abolition of capital punishment. The report goes on to say:

It is impossible to say with certainty whether capital punishment significantly reduces the incidence of heinous crimes. The most complete study on the subject, based on a comparison of homicide rates in capital and non-capital jurisdictions, concluded that there is no discernible correlation between the availability of the death penalty and the homicide rate.

That pretty well agrees with what the minister said.

This study also revealed that there was no significant difference between the two kinds of states in the safety of policemen. Another study of 27 states indicated that the availability of the death sentence had no effect on the rate of assaults and murders of prison guards.

In this bill, Mr. Speaker, we are making an exception of cases involving children or elderly people. In this regard I can remember some dreadful cases. I remember a case where an elderly couple were put on a stove which was then turned on in order to try to make this couple yield their pension cheques. They died. I believe that the accused in that case enjoyed a commutation of the death sentence. And there are even tougher cases. In this regard I agree that the question of insanity should be looked into. The report goes on:

Whatever views one may have on the efficacy of the death penalty as a deterrent, it clearly has an undesirable impact on the administration of criminal justice. Capital cases take longer to litigate at the trial level—