

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATION RESPECTING
ABOLITION

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): In view of the uncertainty surrounding the infliction of the capital sentence, and bearing in mind the case brought to the attention of the house by the hon. member for York-Humber and the uncertainty which today exists in the minds of those who are awaiting execution, may I ask whether the government now intends to give consideration to the introduction of legislation for the abolition of capital punishment?

Hon. L. T. Pennell (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. gentleman for giving me notice of his intention to raise this question. I also thank him for raising a very important subject. This matter has been under consideration by the government, and if it is proposed to amend or change the existing law an announcement will be made at the appropriate time and as soon as possible.

Mr. Fulton: In the meantime will the existing law be carried out?

Mr. Pennell: With respect, the law is being carried out.

Mr. Lambert: I beg to differ.

Mr. Diefenbaker: How many now, to the minister's knowledge, are there in jail awaiting execution?

Mr. Pennell: The right hon. gentleman will appreciate that I am speaking from memory, but I believe the figure is nine or ten.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION RESPECTING
SAFETY FEATURES ON AUTOMOBILES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heward Graffey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Industry. I should like to ask him, since final studies were completed last week in Ottawa regarding a code for safety features in automobiles, is the government considering passing legislation in the form of a code for the public who purchase motor vehicles?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, consideration is being given to the introduction of legislation where appropriate and in fields in which the federal government has jurisdiction.

Inquiries of the Ministry

VETERANS AFFAIRS

REPORT ON PENSION COMMISSION—INCREASE
IN DISABILITY PENSIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct to the Minister of Veterans Affairs a question of current concern to many veterans and their dependants in Canada at this time. Can the minister inform the house when he expects the report of Mr. Justice Wood on the organization of the Canadian Pension Commission will be tabled in the house, and when legislation will be introduced to provide for increases in war disability pensions and war veterans allowances?

Hon. Roger Teillet (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first I should like to thank the hon. member for advising me that he would raise this matter today. With regard to the first part of the question, I think all of us are grateful for the fact that the evidence before and interest in the Wood inquiry has been such that it has taken many more months than many of us anticipated. I am not complaining about that. I think this shows that the matter is important. When the report is received we hope it will be of real value to us.

As to when this report may be received, I must say that it is still a question, although I hope to receive it within a month or so. I think the hon. member will appreciate that I will not press the chairman of this inquiry to rush his report. I am sure, as all hon. members who know him will be aware, that he will do so as quickly as possible.

Concerning the second part of the question, I hope at the first opportunity to present to the house a measure, which I anticipate will be by way of an estimate because we will deal with amendments to this act at a later date, dealing with war disability pensions and war veterans allowances. This I will do. The government has taken its decision on this and I would want to introduce it at the earliest possible moment.

While I am on my feet may I also deal with a question asked last Thursday by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition with regard to war veterans allowances. I should like to say to him that it is not my intention to recommend a change of principle in respect of the War Veterans' Allowance Act. There will, however, be some measures affecting the ceilings on income when I can bring to the house the amendments I have suggested.