

true that in days gone by capital punishment was inflicted in England in respect of many offences which to-day appear to us trivial, but the fact that they have eliminated capital punishment for all other crimes except murder goes to show that the criminal law has been developed in the direction of the widest sympathy for erring humanity, and the reasons that they adhere to capital punishment in the administration of the criminal law of England, as respects murder, ought to be sufficient for us to follow the examples which have guided us for so many years. We may, therefore, be pardoned if we fail to accept the reasoning or the sentiment applied to the question by my hon. friend.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I appreciate, in common with the other members who have listened to the hon. member (Mr. Bickerdike), the earnestness and sincerity with which he has presented his views, even if we do not concur in all the conclusions he has reached after his consideration of the subject. All the members of the House are impressed with the very great importance of this question. I do not purpose debating the matter this afternoon, because it is desirable that the Minister of Justice should speak on this motion before the debate is concluded. Before moving the adjournment of the debate, I would like to say to my hon. friend that we shall see that an opportunity shall be afforded him of having the debate continued.

With regard to the observations of my hon. friend from Frontenac (Mr. Edwards), I may say that I remember that an investigation was held into the condition in the Kingston penitentiary, and that the report of that commission, after careful investigation disclosed that certain abuses prevailed. I would be surprised if the abuses to which my hon. friend has alluded have been allowed to continue in Kingston penitentiary since, and I would also be surprised to learn that they exist in all the penitentiaries in Canada. However, that is a matter as to which I have no personal knowledge. It is a subject peculiarly within the knowledge of the Minister of Justice, who unfortunately cannot be here to-day. For that reason also it is highly desirable that the debate should be adjourned, in order that the attention of the Minister of Justice may be directed to the observations of the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Edwards). As to the insane who have been

[Mr. Kyte.]

confined in penitentiaries, I understand that negotiations have been going on for some time past, between the Minister of Justice and the various provincial authorities, with the view to an arrangement by which insane prisoners should be transferred to asylums under the control and jurisdiction of the provincial authorities. Although the information comes to my knowledge indirectly in the absence of the Minister of Justice, I understand that arrangements have been consummated with all the provinces of Canada except one, and from that province there are only two insane persons confined in the penitentiary, as to whom a suitable arrangement will be made. However, I am not in a position to give the House this afternoon a full explanation which will be afforded by the Minister of Justice later on. I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned.

QUESTIONS.

[Questions to be answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.]

WAR CONTRACTS—HAY.

Mr. CARVELL:

1. With what persons, firms or corporations has the Department of Agriculture, or any other department of the Government of Canada, contracted for hay for the British Government, since the first day of August last past?
2. How much hay has been delivered by each of the said persons, firms or corporations since that date, and the places of delivery thereof?
3. What price, or prices, was paid to each of the said persons, firms or corporations for the hay when delivered to the Government, and the several ports or points of delivery?
4. Into how many cubic feet per ton was the said hay to be compressed, and what was to be the size and weight of each of the said bales?
5. Has the Government, or any department thereof, paid any such persons, firms or corporations, for the compressing of the said hay, the actual article having been furnished by the Government, or a department thereof? If so, what persons, firms or corporations did the compressing, and what price per ton were they paid for so doing?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I would ask that this question stand as a notice of motion for a return. There is some question as to the extent to which it should be answered in view of the precedent which was laid down some years ago, and there are other considerations which I shall be glad to mention to the House when the motion comes up at a later date.

Question to stand as notice of motion for a return.