

our present one would not lead to an increase in crime, and I do not think that conclusion is too far-fetched. I quote further from the same book:

The argument that the abolition of capital punishment would lead to the increased use of lethal weapons, particularly firearms by the professional burglar, is necessarily based only on opinion. It is not borne out by the experience of other countries.

As to the method of putting people to death, I have before me one item which shows that in the United States a man struggled for eight minutes under lethal gas, and was finally smothered to death. Most hon. members have seen people put under an anaesthetic and know how easy and pleasant it is to go under it. I think it is much harder to go under an anaesthetic than it is to be put to sleep by lethal gas. Most people are familiar with the effects of carbon monoxide, which will render a person unconscious very quickly, and without their being at all aware of it.

Mr. LAWSON: May I ask if the hon. gentleman has ever taken a general anaesthetic?

Mr. BLAIR: I have given it to thousands.

Mr. LAWSON: I appreciate that, but the hon. gentleman says, "You know how pleasant it is to go under an anaesthetic." I have had every anaesthetic known and they are not pleasant. It is a very unpleasant experience, extremely unpleasant.

Mr. BLAIR: We have had scores of cases brought to the Toronto hospital of people suffering from carbon monoxide gas, which they have absorbed perhaps from a furnace or from the exhaust of a motor car when the engine has been left running with the garage doors closed. In a very few minutes they would become unconscious from the carbon monoxide gas, and have to be resuscitated. When asked why they did not leave the room they invariably said, "I did not know I was going to sleep." That is one of the characteristics of carbon monoxide poisoning. You go to sleep very quickly and are quite unaware of the danger.

Mr. DUPUIS: Would the hon. gentleman give an experiment here?

Mr. BLAIR: No; it cannot be experimented with readily. It is a very dangerous gas, odourless, invisible and tasteless.

I should also like to give a quotation from a speech made by the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) in the House of Com-

mons on April 4, 1935, as reported in Hansard at page 2440. He said:

The minister said the other day—

He was referring to the Hon. Hugh Guthrie, Minister of Justice in the former government, a man for whom I know the present minister has a great respect, and by whose opinions he is guided as much as by anybody's:

The minister said the other day, in connection with a ghastly incident relating to the hanging of a woman in Montreal, that this was under provincial jurisdiction. He is quite right as to that, but I wonder whether we should not, if we retain a capital punishment—and I am not prepared to say that we should do away with it—have a change because this is the criminal code of the country in the method of execution, so that it should be carried out only in a penitentiary and not in any district.

I believe the electric chair, or some other device, might be preferable to this remnant of old days when such things as we have read about in the papers recently are likely to happen. I just suggest to my hon. friend that the question ought to be studied.

I remember the Minister of Justice making that statement in this house. I would suggest this to the lawyers, not to send for a couple of carpenters the next time a man has to be put to death, to tell them how to do it, nor for a school of science man, but to get a doctor to tell you how to put a man to death.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. BLAIR: I am sure that this bill would appeal to the doctors and coroners of this country more than to any other class of human species on earth because they all know what pain and suffering mean. For thirty years I have been trying to save life, and I know what it is to see people suffer. We should do what we could to end useless pain and suffering. Let us not use the law to inflict punishment on a dying man. Remember what Shakespeare said:

Vex not his ghost: O! let him pass; he
hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough
world
Stretch him out longer.

Mr. LAWSON: Would the hon. gentleman be good enough to advise me and the house how long it takes to produce unconsciousness in the case of hanging; that is, what space of time must elapse from the drop until a man is unconscious? Would he also tell me how long it takes to produce unconsciousness by means of lethal gas; that is, what time elapses from the time a man is pushed into the chamber until he becomes unconscious?