

opinion, however, that the view expressed does not represent the opinion of the members of the respective churches. I hear various church groups putting forward opinions on free trade and other economic matters, and while I listen to those opinions, I do not take them as gospel, if I may put it that way.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I listen attentively to the church groups, to the Bishops; but, I pay attention to my constituents.

[Translation]

Mr. Rossi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) on a point of order.

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, each time a Conservative Member speaks for twenty minutes, the Chair recognizes members of the same party during the period for questions and comments. According to our customs, the Opposition should also have the opportunity to express its views. I am sorry, but I have noticed this on many occasions, even though the Chair may deny it. This does happen!

Mr. Cassidy: I am not a Conservative.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am alternating on the basis of a Progressive Conservative, NDP, Progressive Conservative—and if the Hon. Member wishes to wait, he will get his turn, too.

[Translation]

Mr. Ferland: Mr. Speaker, as I shall be speaking myself this morning about capital punishment, I shall be happy to let my colleague for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) ask questions in my place. Go ahead!

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly be pleased to respond to any question the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) has. I think we should—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order. I recognized the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Ostrom) first, as he was the first to indicate that he wished to put a question. I then recognized the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy), following which I was willing to recognize the Hon. Member for Portneuf (Mr. Ferland) and then the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi).

I think the Chair has been very fair, and I would ask that we get on with the debate.

If the Hon. Member for Portneuf has a question or comment, he may proceed, and following his intervention, I shall recognize the Hon. Member for Bourassa.

Capital Punishment

[Translation]

Mr. Ferland: Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief. My colleague for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson) said in his speech that the state has the right to take away the life of an individual who has himself taken another life and had been found guilty of that crime. He also said that the abolitionists are much more concerned with the criminals than with the victim. First, as the state does not give life, I do not see why it should be able to take it away. Second, I would like him to explain to me how this can help the victim come back to life. After being killed, the victim is also dead. I do not think that killing someone else will bring the victim back to life. I would like the Hon. Member to go a bit further and provide weightier arguments as he has failed to convince me.

• (1200)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I think the best way to respond to the question by the Hon. Member for Portneuf (Mr. Ferland) is to quote again Mrs. Lee-Knight who has suffered this sort of experience. She says:

Such thinking apparently does not take into account those lives of victims that are being left over. The victims are gone and cannot speak—easy to leap over them even piled as high as they are. The majority of families of victims are too heartsick to place themselves in an even more vulnerable position than they already are in by going public. The daily encounter, heartbreaking reminders as it is—they are subjected to cruel unthinking remarks—they have to keep trying to live and they are weakened and ineffective with the constant pain and continual trying. It's easy to leap over their heads, just disregard them and get on with idealistic (though not realistic) propaganda. They won't get in the way. Eventually abolitionists will convince themselves they—

She is referring to the victims, and continues:

—aren't real—don't really exist—not in their town, not in their neighbourhood.

[Translation]

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, I was very glad to hear the Hon. Member say at the end of his speech—

[English]

“When I was elected to Parliament my first promise was to work on the reform of the penitentiary system and on capital punishment”.

[Translation]

Here is my first question: Why does he not get seriously to work to develop a better penal system? Having been myself, as many Hon. Members will probably know, a lieutenant-detective in the armed robbery and homicide division in Montreal for thirty-one years, I can honestly say that his first suggestion that we apply our penal code to the letter would perhaps be a better solution than his second suggestion that we reinstate capital punishment. He may have promised to support reinstatement of the death penalty, but I would strongly advise that we first improve our penal system, because