

Government Orders

taking the criminal back to the scene of the crime so they can complete the task.

Crown counsels have failed in the area. It is my understanding there have been 200 charges against individuals for family violence and in that case, only 90 convictions. Of those convictions, often there was a suspended sentence with the agreement that the person not beat up or commit violence against their wife.

I might just finish with the question. What is needed is not *per se* gun control. We have to get to the bottom of this issue of family violence and violence against women.

Does the hon. member concur that a major failing on the part of the government on this issue is failure to address one of the real issues in this?

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, yes, I do. I think that gun control legislation can be only one element in the prevention of violent crimes in Canada, but we cannot forget about gun control. I pointed out that each time as we tightened out gun laws, we have been able to reduce the rate of crime with guns. So gun laws are important.

The hon. member is absolutely correct that if you stop with simply tightening your gun laws, you are not going to do enough. A lot of the violence is against women by their partners, spouses, or other types of partners, and there are not enough shelters for these women. There are not enough programs to deal with the men who are abusing their wives and their partners. There is a whole realm of social policies that could be advanced and put into operation that would deal with the causes of this violence. We are not doing enough there.

Governments at all levels are not doing enough, so I agree with the hon. member. That having been said, I still believe that we have to do more to control those instruments of violence, the gun, which is used more than any other weapon in killing. Thirty per cent of our homicides in Canada are committed with a gun, but the gun, different than all the others, has as its sole purpose to kill. You can cut bread with a knife, and sometimes it is used for killing, but I would rather have someone chasing me with a knife than with a semi-automatic.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to a subject that I would say is extremely important.

One of my constituents died last year on December 6, 1989, in the course of events that caused emotions to run high, not only among Quebecers but also among Canadians across the country. The events that occurred at the École polytechnique have made people in this country think about the serious consequences of social disruption and psychological trauma in some individuals. In this respect, I may recall the sad case of a young man in Montreal, Marc Lépine, who achieved his unfortunate notoriety in such sad circumstances, and in doing so shocked us all very deeply. Why, Madam Speaker?

Because we tend to think that most people on this planet are reasonable and normal and act with the judgment instilled in them by their parents from childhood. Unfortunately, our society is evolving very rapidly. Not all students in Canada are successful in their endeavours. Today, 30 per cent of our young men and women are incapable of finishing high school.

Madam Speaker, for many young Canadians, this causes problems when they start looking for a job, and as a result, there may be social and psychological problems may be extremely traumatic.

We all judged Marc Lépine very harshly last year, and this House was unanimous in announcing its awareness of a reality for which no short-term solutions can be found. However, that does not mean we should not be concerned.

Madam Speaker, I have always felt that abolishing firearms outright—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, I will have to interrupt the hon. member for Saint-Maurice who, I am sure, would wish to continue his speech at some other time.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's *Order Paper*.