

Often alcohol is involved. A fight takes place at a bar, or on the street; a bit of pushing takes place, and a knife is produced. In the heat of the moment, a murder takes place.

The death penalty will not stop this type of murder. Banning knives will, or it at least will decrease the number of murders. But, the people of my riding have got nowhere in their quest for action to reduce the number of murders. I call upon the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn), once again, to investigate this situation. I ask him to consider the request for amendments to the Criminal Code that will prohibit the carrying of dangerous knives in public places.

This is a debate about how we view ourselves as a nation. Do we want to be a nation where the state conducts cold-blooded murder? I say no: no to death and yes to life.

Citizens must be protected, and murderers must be committed—for a lifetime, if necessary; but state murder of murderers is no solution. It denigrates all of us, as we ourselves become killers. It is immoral; it is wrong.

Let's direct our energies, instead, toward working for life, for humanity, and for a better society. Let's try to reduce violence and hate on TV and in society. Let's help children to grow with love and security, and reasonable limits, such that they become socialized human beings who care about others.

● (2200)

Let's provide necessary services and guidance at an early age for those who lack inner strengths or are emotionally disturbed. Let's offer young people positive alternatives to homelessness, drugs, prostitution, crime, and a terrible incidence of suicide. Let's get on with positive programs to deal with child abuse and domestic violence which can lead to death and murders. Let's start a serious war on poverty, on unemployment, and on hopelessness which is the chronic state of far too many Canadians.

I say from my heart to all my colleagues in the House, let's be proud tonight that we have reaffirmed the importance of life while we sat in our time as Members of Parliament in the House. Let's do a noble thing together tonight. Let's refuse to go backward to reinstate the death penalty. Let's vote instead in large numbers against this motion and for a better society in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, I have made a number of important speeches since I began my recent political career, but this one will be one of the most important ones, and I therefore wish to dedicate it in all sincerity, first of all to my colleagues in this House who do not share my views, then to my constituents in the riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup and to all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, editorial writer Carl Thériault at the weekly newspaper the *St-Laurent Echo*, who is well known in my riding, concluded an article on the death penalty in the May 7 issue this year with the following words, and I quote:

Capital Punishment

The issue may be a very personal one for each Member of the House of Commons but it is also a reflection of how the collective attitudes of a nation have changed. A country like Canada has always been known for its balanced opinions based on facts rather than on the emotional content of certain problems.

The death penalty is a good example. We can only hope that Canadian parliamentarians will continue to live up to this honourable reputation.

Mr. Speaker, my speech on this very important question will try to reflect the attitudes and purpose supported by this philosopher from my region.

From his conclusion we realize he does not side with the majority who, in my constituency as in many areas in Canada, in answer to a flat question: "Are you for or against?" have to come up with a bold answer, with no possibility of tempering their views as required by such a difficult subject, and without having had an opportunity to think the matter over before making such an outright choice, for or against.

Mr. Speaker, in support of my choice I would like to bring the view of another eminent citizen of my constituency of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, judge Jean-Paul Bérubé, the dean of Sessions Courts judges in Quebec. He summed up the matter of capital punishment a few months only before being appointed to that court. In a now defunct local newspaper called *Le Renouveau*, when the late John Diefenbaker's Conservative Government was considering indeed abolishing capital punishment, Mr. Jean-Paul Bérubé wrote, and I quote:

Abolitionists claim that capital punishment is absurd, it prevents a criminal from redeeming himself, it repares nothing; it does not intimidate criminals, let alone deterring them; finally, what if a court error leads to an innocent being executed, that error is beyond repair, and then society as a whole is responsible.

And the lawyer concluded with a quote from a French priest, who for some time was a Member of France's Parliament, a firm abolitionist, who stated during a debate on the abolition of capital punishment, and I quote that extremely intense comment which clearly defines the challenge before this Parliament: He used to say: "Capital punishment is an illusionary and dangerous defence. It attacks the effects of crime and not its causes. It is an easy way out which excuses the legislators from addressing the real problem, that of prevention and possible rehabilitation".

Mr. Speaker, it is not the first time that we try to sum up this vital issue. The first time I remember dates back to the Diefenbaker government which had opened the debate on this issue. I had been impressed by an argument which I could not quote exactly now but which meant that capital punishment would deter neither the murderer who plans his crime because he is convinced he is clever enough to escape justice, nor the murderer acting out of passion who, in a moment of uncontrollable emotion, acts without thinking twice, nor the hired assassin who kills in cold blood for a price which has nothing to do with the risk of capital punishment. So that, in the end, the only people really intimidated by this legislation are those who will never kill.

Mr. Speaker, even if I am perfectly aware that most of my constituents would give a positive answer to the question "Are you in favour of reinstating capital punishment?", I am