

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what book or article of Professor Bedau's the Hon. Member was reading, but he is out of date. The professor has written a more recent book. I spoke to Professor Bedau three weeks ago in Boston. I met with him at a conference. He has just published a book in which he documents 349 cases, 23 of which were executed by mistake. I would say to the Hon. Member that if the state wants to take a life, the burden of proof is on those people who want to take that life through capital punishment to prove it will have a positive effect on society. The burden is not on us who are opposed to the death penalty. If the state wants to take a life by bringing back the death penalty, or several lives by execution, it is up to it to demonstrate the need for it. It is doing a very serious thing by taking a life. It is up to the state to demonstrate that by taking those lives through execution, it will protect society and bring about a better society. If it cannot prove that, then it fails and we should not have a death penalty.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to enter into the capital punishment debate. I would just like to read the results of a recent survey taken in my riding of Winnipeg—Assiniboine. It is the largest return I have ever received on any questionnaire in my 15 years in Ottawa. I received some 7,000 responses to a detailed questionnaire. The return of capital punishment was requested by 78.7 per cent of the respondents. Legal injection over hanging, gas or electrocution was preferred by 85.8 per cent of the respondents. One question asked was: "If you favour capital punishment, what crime should be capital crimes?" The response came in to "all premeditated first degree murder" at 93.8 per cent. For the murder of police and prison guards the response was 94.2 per cent and for murder involving another serious crime it was 75.8 per cent. so there is strong support for the return of capital punishment in Winnipeg—Assiniboine and also in Manitoba. A capital punishment survey taken in Manitoba indicated, and I quote:

82.5 per cent of the Manitoba population favour the death penalty for the killing of either police officers or prison guards;

I think we are also going to have to add security guards, uniformed and plainclothes. There are uniformed guards in this building and their lives are at risk just the same as the policeman on the beat. So I believe we have to include these guards and others in the House of Commons and provincial legislatures, and also include private security people.

We have heard a lot of quotes from the Bible, different church organizations and different religious groups. I received a letter today from the Toronto Free Presbyterian Church. I would like to read part of its statement into the record:

Please do not let yourself be overly swayed by those Church leaders who call loudly for the abolition of the death penalty. Is it not strange that many of

Capital Punishment

them who regard capital punishment as barbaric are, at the same time, through the World Council of Churches, sending financial aid to terrorist groups, whose stock in trade is murder?

It is obvious these Church leaders have lost touch with their people when the overwhelming desire on the part of Canadians is for the return of the death penalty for first degree murder. These are not "revenge-seekers" and "barbaric". Canadians generally are hard-working, loyal and law-abiding citizens, and their voice must be heard. It is our hope when the vote is taken you will faithfully represent the views of your constituents.

I will be voting on behalf of my constituents when we vote, Mr. Speaker. Members of Parliament have received a document from the Reverend E. Stevens of the St. Paul's Presbyterian Church here in Ottawa. It is entitled "Capital Punishment Again? A Christian perspective". Mr. Stevens stated:

Capital Punishment is a subject which, in my view, needs a major "rethink" in Christian circles, because for almost 50 years now the official thinking of the major denominations has been dominated by a liberal-humanitarian philosophy which needs to be challenged. Finally, the subject is important because it involves other important Christian beliefs, notably three: the nature of God, the authority and responsibilities of the state and the nature of punishment.

We have all heard statistics, and I guess we could all stand up here for a couple of hours quoting every statistic under the sun, but the Citizens United For Safety & Justice in North Vancouver, British Columbia, have compiled some very interesting statistics which show that attempted murders have increased by 939 per cent over the last few years. The reason we have not had another 939 murders on our hands is due to advancement in medical technology, paramedics, use of protective clothing, and so on. Many victims' lives have been saved which otherwise would have been lost. How many listed as attempted murder would otherwise have been listed as murder?

As I mentioned earlier today, we have to take the Air India disaster into consideration. That was premeditated, cold blooded murder. A person who would plant a bomb on a aircraft containing 329 people is not a person we would want to have on this earth. I do not want to have to ask any prison guard to guard a person or persons who would do such a cruel act. These types of persons have to receive the death penalty.

Other statistics are coming in my office daily. I hope they are all accurate. I checked a number of them out and have not found any which are totally wrong. I think it has to go into the record that since 1977 at least 20 people have been murdered inside federal prison walls by convicted murderers. We have had prison guards murdered in my province, and I have a lot of sympathy for prison guards. I think we have to do something to protect them. In July, 1982 three prison guards were murdered, one by hanging, by men who had been convicted of the first-degree murder of policemen. I can recall that a couple of years ago a guard in the Archambault Prison in Quebec, one hour before he was to retire was murdered by a murderer. He was knifed to death. So there you are. In October of 1986 a young girl was murdered in Belleville by a convicted murderer on parole. I certainly do not know how he got out on parole.