

Government Orders

received one of these letters as I have received correspondence from you on this topic. I hereby request that you remove me from your mailing list”.

I am not saying that all the letters are forged but I am sure that 15 members received letters that are the same. They have not sent a letter to anybody but somehow someone took the liberty to send letters to members of Parliament so they can say they received 200, 300, 1,000 letters, and that is how they can make public opinion saying people oppose it. The fact is that people support this bill.

I want to raise the issue of rural and urban communities. In the last byelection in a riding in Quebec 62 per cent of the riding was rural and 38 per cent was urban. In that byelection nobody ever raised the issue of gun control. It is obvious that rural Canadians support the bill. They are happy with it and they want to go forward with it so we can build a new Canada, safe and sound for everybody.

• (1655)

On September 17, I invited members of Parliament in metro Toronto to attend meetings with the constable in charge of the gun depot in metro Toronto. He showed us 13,000 handguns, machine guns, AK-47s or M-16s, whatever the case may be. Some of them were legally owned, stolen from their owners so they could be used in crimes. They showed me replicas so similar it was hard to say which one was which.

Don Valley North is one of the few ridings in the country that has no gun shop. We would like to keep it that way.

Most people complain about the registration section of this bill. When this bill was presented last year I phoned the city of North York and asked how many dogs are registered there. The answer is 18,710. We asked the minister and members of this Parliament how many guns we have in the country. They tell us anywhere from 4 million to 15 million.

Four million to 15 million guns can do more harm to the country and its citizens than 18,000 dogs in North York. If we can register the dogs, the cats, the cars, why not the guns? I cannot understand. No one has been able to explain it to me. I am a reasonable person, more than the hon. member on the other side who shouts meaningless sentences. He should answer to Canadians why he opposes legislation when 80 per cent to 85 per cent of Canadians support it and want to go ahead with this bill.

Many guns used in a crime these days are stolen from rightful owners; as I said before, 3,800 guns. If legislation goes through the way it is, we will know exactly where the guns come from so

we can follow up, trace them and hold the owner of a gun responsible.

It is my pleasure to support this bill to the best of my ability. I can assure the House, even my colleagues in the Reform Party, that the Don Valley North population supports this bill 100 per cent. We will make sure that by passing this bill Canada will be a safe place.

In the last two years Canada was rated the best country by the United Nations and we will make sure it continues to be one of the best and safest countries in the world.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bourassa—The budget; the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake—Low level flights; the hon. member for Kamloops—Royal Bank of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this debate has taken on quite a bit of emotion. I would like to approach it from the standpoint of the gun control advocates who I believe are intelligent, compassionate people, who truly believe that stricter control of firearms will make our streets safer. I believe also that the justice minister truly has those thoughts in mind. I do not think he has any nefarious reasons to be doing what he is doing.

We desire to split the bill into two components. One component Reformers would very quickly support. The other I do not think we would.

On the issue of registration I have looked beyond the borders of Canada to find out what registration did in countries where it was tried. This is the only mechanism I have to compare Canada with other countries. By the justice minister's own recollection there is no statistical basis for doing what we are doing. I looked beyond our shores. I am really addressing this to those who honestly believe registration will work.

New Zealand registered all firearms. Over quite a complex process it registered its firearms.

• (1700)

I went through the history of it. Back in World War I it had reason to be concerned about firearms coming into the country and it registered them. After registering firearms for many years it looked at registration and asked whether it achieved the purpose for which it was undertaken. I have heard the justice minister say that the reason its registration system failed was that it had a poor computer system.

That may be the reason but New Zealand said the registration was of limited value because compliance was poor. Moving from spot to spot was not reported so that even if a person had