

known. So in the circumstances, it is very difficult to take seriously what was said by the hon. member from Port Moody—Coquitlam because tomorrow he will say the exact opposite about something else.

The Canadian government wishes to consult Canadians because this question is very controversial, for instance, in the riding of Saint-Maurice, and has given rise to three or four different trends. I think it is quite reasonable for the Minister of Justice, who has the full support of members on this side of the House, to proceed in this way.

I cannot say the same for the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Madam Speaker, who has been a member of this House since 1979 but failed to receive the confidence of his party colleagues at the NDP convention. He was soundly defeated, despite his experience, by someone who was a newcomer to politics.

So before criticizing our confidence in the Minister of Justice, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam should consider the total lack of confidence displayed by his colleagues and party militants.

Madam Speaker, I think it is very important for us in this situation to realize that Canadian citizens are very much aware the question is not as straightforward as the hon. member for the NDP would have us believe. In concluding, I would like to say that this kind of legislation is not cut and dried. The situation is complex. Hunters are involved, people who collect firearms and, of course, criminals. And there are also our police forces and the Armed Forces. Firearms exist in this country.

The easiest solution would be to abolish them outright, but I don't think we have reached that point yet. I would ask the hon. member for the NDP to give very serious consideration to being an active participant and to decide not to boycott the committee proposed today.

[*English*]

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, that is a bit of a cheap shot. In my election campaign I got more votes for less money than all the other candidates of both leadership contests in the last year. That must be worth something.

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The Minister of Justice ran for the leadership of the Social Credit Party in British Columbia. I think she came about where I came on the pecking order, and she went on to become the Minister of Justice. That is not too bad.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, the hon. member should realize that what we have here is a bill that concerns firearms. Today, we agreed with the Liberal Party to adopt this bill, and it was the government that decided to appoint another committee. I want to ask the hon. member this: What is he going to say to the young women at the École polytechnique in Montreal? He voted against the firearms bill, although he supports the government that tabled the bill. The minister promised students in Montreal a year ago that the government would support this kind of legislation. What is he going to say to the students in Montreal?

[*English*]

Instead we have another committee. They have rejected their own law. It is a victory for the gun lobby. That is pretty sad, is it not? What is he going to say to these students in Montreal about that?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The period for questions and comments has now expired. Resuming debate.

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I could say it goes without saying, but in this House it seems that nothing ever goes without saying. I do not accept the conclusions that were arrived at by my hon. predecessor. However, I was very interested in his comments, as I was interested in the comments by the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys and the minister earlier this morning.

Every thinking Canadian has to agree with the objective behind this legislation. Every one of us wants a safer, saner society where no one has to fear unduly for their own safety.

I support many of the provisions that are in this bill. I know very well and I have heard first hand that many people have serious concerns.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hesitate to interrupt my hon. friend, but we are not debating the bill. We are debating a motion to refer to committee. If we were debating the bill, the government would have called the bill.