

shotgun wounds which took place in his community not too long ago. Mr. Sullivan said that many of the cases his organization heard about were crimes committed by ordinary people in nice communities rather than by criminals.

That is one main thought I want to leave with people this morning. While the bill is about crime control, it also deals with the fact that the vast majority of deaths by guns do not occur during the commission of a crime. They do not occur because a criminal, a stranger, shoots and tries to take something from someone or tries to perpetrate some other crime. The majority of gun related deaths and injuries happen in the home and are by someone known to the victim. That is the side of the legislation I want to address.

Let me give some facts. In this community in the last six months seven people have died at the hands of a family member: five of the deaths were caused by guns and two were school aged children. Five of the seven deaths were gun related yet probably less than 20 per cent of homes in this urban area have guns. That tells me a great deal. Of the 1,400 deaths in the last year caused by guns, 1,100 were suicides. That reflects in large part the accessibility of a gun to commit suicide.

Over 200 of the 1,400 deaths were homicides and the remainder were accidents. The majority of homicides, 86 per cent, are committed by family members, friends or acquaintances. Guns are a particularly serious threat to women. Almost half the women were killed by spouses or ex-spouses and almost half the women killed by their partners are shot even though half the homes in the country do not have guns. Also 78 per cent of the guns used in these killings are legally owned. The problem is not only illegally owned guns. The problem is legally owned guns, which is what the legislation tries to address in part.

Domestic and other intimate assaults are 12 times more likely to result in death if a gun is involved. I was serious when I said the bill is about preventing the deaths of human beings. We have significant evidence that a large number of offenders act impulsively, suggesting that the simple availability of a gun determines whether a homicide will or will not occur.

We cannot forget our children. Since 1970, 470 children have died in accidents involving firearms. If we truly believe in the value of our children we should do all we can to protect them, and this is one measure to do so.

The most contentious issue in the legislation is the registration of guns. Seven million firearms are held by approximately three million Canadians. We have no way of knowing how many guns are in the country at any one time, who the owners are, and

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whether or not the guns were legally or illegally acquired. Registration is designed to change that.

I realize I have very little time in the debate this morning. Crime control is important and the bill addresses that. It is also important to control legally owned guns in the hands of their owners, because those are the guns that are responsible for the majority of gun related homicides and deaths in the country.

A constituent who wrote to me said quite simply that she believed we should go ahead with the legislation and that it was important for people who owned guns to be accountable and held responsible for the use of those guns. Is that not what good citizenship is all about, accountability and responsibility as well as rights and privileges?

• (1200)

I urge all members of this House to consider the large number of deaths that occur in this country every year. Consider the role that legally owned guns play in those homicides. I urge members to consider whether they do not want to be part of making this a safer society.

The justice minister referred earlier to how important he feels this legislation is for his children. I want to make the same personal comment. Later this afternoon I am going to the airport to pick up my daughter and my six-week old grandson but I am not going home to have dinner with them. I am coming back here to vote for this legislation. I am doing it for my daughter and I am doing it for my grandson. I am doing it for the kind of society I want him to be able to grow up in.

In Canada, we have never believed either as a nation or as individuals that settling our problems by violence and by power is the way we develop. That is why Canada has become a nation that symbolizes around the world a peaceful resolution of problems. It is why we have evolved a reputation that has made our flag, which we will celebrate again in just a few weeks, a symbol to the world of how people can live in harmony.

It is because we have had a different sense of values than those more American values I have heard expressed in this debate. We have not felt we have to rely on weapons to evolve a civilized society. By peaceful means, by peaceful resolution, by collectively agreeing on control of the criminal elements in our society and by creating a safer environment we will have the kind of country we want to live in and that we want to leave to the next generation.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Ottawa West why her party decided to change the status quo, stipulating that, in the future, the restricted firearms safety courses mentioned in subclause 7(2) of the bill on firearms will have to be approved