

Government Orders

We ask very simply how will the registration of these 200 firearms have any impact at all? Reduce the suicides. Reduce the domestic occurrences. How will it do that? I did not hear a thing. I never heard a thing that the hon. member said that went anywhere near answering that question.

That is what the common sense people are asking for. I have told the people all across the country where I have met with them that I would be willing to give up my right to own the old weapon that I have locked away if it would reduce the criminal use of firearms.

It is not going to reduce the criminal use of firearms. It is simply not because we know where they are getting them from. He has given evidence of that. The haul that the police made in Vancouver on all of these weapons being smuggled in is evidence.

As a peace officer I know we get about 10 per cent of the infractions that occur. One can multiply that haul by about 90 per cent for the day. We have some understanding of the number of firearms being smuggled into our country.

If statistics and evidence can be submitted to suggest that this will save lives, we have not seen it yet and that is what we are asking for.

• (1725)

Before the hon. member comments on what I have had to say, I would like to point out one glaring error in the statistics which have been given to the House in this debate. In 1977 the Auditor General's report indicated clearly that the reduction in violent crime through the use of firearms was beginning before the legislation came in. The Auditor General said that it was wrong to assume that the total responsibility for the dip which had been reported in the House after the 1977 legislation was brought in was the only cause for the decline because there were causative factors which came to bear prior to that.

I leave that information for the hon. member. I have been in northern Ontario, by invitation, and I welcome him on the campaign trail during the next election if he continues his stand on this issue.

Mr. Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the challenge is accepted. I will be running in the next election and I will support this bill.

I am here to do a job. I am here to do what is good for Canadians. Unlike my colleagues on the other side, everything that I do in politics is not measured by the number of votes that I will be getting. I am here to do an honest job. I swore an oath. I told people about the way that I do my politics and my politics are done for the good of the people I represent, not to be re-elected.

It is fascinating that people who question every simple statistic presented by reputable companies, who have disputed every poll done by credible, reputable companies are saying show them statistics. We know already they will say they are all wrong, only their statistics apply.

My hon. colleague who asked the question said that he was a police officer and that he had never heard of such hogwash. When I said there were 250 to 300 rifles in some of my constituents' basements, it is because a crime was committed in one of those homes, the wife was killed and suicide occurred. I do not make up these stories. They break us up when we think about them, when we think of their children and their neighbours. It is not hogwash. If that is the type of police officers in his community, I am very pleased he was not a police officer in northern Ontario. I will leave it at that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We have very little time before we move to the next order of business at 5:30. I will take a question from the hon. member for Red Deer, but wanting to give an equal amount of time to the hon. member for Nickel Belt to respond, I hope that the intervention will be brief in order that he may give a brief response.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will make my question very brief. I will not try to answer or discuss any of the claims which have been made. However, what I would like to do—and you know the facility that I am talking about in central Alberta, between Edmonton and Calgary—is challenge the minister to stand in front of the thousands of people who would come out to hear the facts about this whole gun control legislation and tell them why they should vote for it. That is an open challenge to the minister to come to tell the people the facts. There will be thousands.

I just brought down a petition which had 5,000 signatures. That gives us an idea of the interest which exists. These people want to hear answers, they want the truth and they want the facts.

I challenge the minister to take me up on that.

[Translation]

Mr. Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the justice minister travelled to Alberta on at least five occasions. Possibly the hon. member opposite was misled when I said that, as a back-bencher, I had asked the minister to come and visit my riding. I think he heard somehow that I was the Minister of Justice. He heard wrong. Mr. Rock is the Minister of Justice and I am the back-bencher.

I would like to address the first question, as I am told it was not answered. How will registration help reduce crime? Already, I have widows phoning me to say: "I have rifles here and I do not know what to do. Can you help?" Already, people in my riding are starting to say: "We have rifles at home and we want to get rid of them."