

*Supply*

I would, however, like to draw attention to the Reformers' approach. While I do not disagree with parts of their motion, I am, however, flabbergasted at the back room scheming of the third party. The third party, I repeat. It is important to mention this, because the motion we were to debate is not the one before us today.

The Reform Party, or should I say, the Opportunity Party, wanted to table a motion, not on victims' rights, but on their own status in the House. We are already well aware of the ambitions of the member for Calgary Southwest, who wants to become leader of the opposition even before the Leader of the Opposition has left.

[English]

**Mr. Silye:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Where is the relevance at this point? We are debating victims rights.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** That is a point of debate, sir.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Venne:** So, Madam Speaker, I continue by saying to you that we have reached the height of hypocrisy. At the last minute, and because of the fact that our leader has not resigned his position, the Reform Party stopped talking about political opportunism and started talking about victims of criminal acts. That takes some nerve. How can we trust a party that is concerned about victims only when its political manoeuvrings do not succeed?

The Reformers often set themselves up as defenders of the weak and of the oppressed when it suits them to do so or, as in this case, when they have no choice. Their chivalry will always depend on how much air time they can get with it. Let us not forget the attitude of the Inquisition Party in the matter of gun control. When the time came to systematically obstruct proceedings both in the House and on the justice committee, the Lancelots of the west became the defenders of native rights.

They contended that they could simply not support a bill that might trample native rights or contravene ancestral treaties. If they think we do not see through their little game, they better think again. We can see them coming a mile off. Today they are proposing a motion on victims' rights, when, not so long ago, they opposed a bill to protect victims.

If they want to talk about victims, let them talk about those who succumb to wounds inflicted by firearms. How can they promote the rights of victims and ignore those who die from gun shot wounds? The statistics on deaths caused by firearms are staggering. In 1991, suicides made up 77 per cent of the 1,445 deaths attributable to firearms. Of the 732 homicides recorded in Canada in 1992, 246, or 34 per cent, were committed with a firearm.

• (1615)

In the last ten years, the majority of homicides were committed with shotguns or rifles. Three times out of four, the woman murdered by her spouse was killed with a shotgun or a rifle.

From 1990 to 1992, in Quebec, 1,293 deaths were attributed to gun shots, an average of 425 deaths annually. Still in Quebec, three deaths out of four that are caused by a firearm are suicides, for a total of about 300 suicides each year. These statistics cannot be ignored.

If Reform members want to talk about victims, they should talk about the ones I just mentioned. If not, they should keep quiet instead of talking nonsense. These far right hypocrites are here only to make political gains. Every chance they get, they tear off their shirts in public in order to attract attention and stand in the limelight.

They should try to emulate the Bloc Quebecois, this mosaic of ideas and talents that, for more than two years, has been fulfilling the double mandate that Quebec voters gave it, that is, to promote Quebec's sovereignty and to act as the official opposition of a government that never stops insulting the intelligence of Quebecers and their legitimate representatives.

While Reform members are revelling in political fiction, we, the Bloc members, are getting ready to pursue the goals that we set for ourselves five years ago, that is, to consolidate our political strength in Ottawa, around Quebec's interests alone, in order to dispel any ambiguity and to support Quebec's march towards sovereignty.

The motion put forward by the Reform Party invites us to condemn the government for two reasons: first, because it supposedly failed to make progress in reforming the criminal justice system in general; and second, because its criminal legislation allegedly favours the rights of the criminal over those of the victim.

What I find shocking is that this motion is a perfect example of disinformation. This is a good way to exploit public resentment. The motion before us simply reflects the nightmares of an extreme right cut off from reality.

This motion is a mishmash of reactionary preconceived notions. They might as well blame the government for winter arriving a little early this year.

According to the third party, the whole criminal justice system should be reformed. Does the Reform Party at least know how? Does it have any alternatives to offer? We all have complaints about the justice system, of course. It is one thing to say that it is flawed; it is another to state that the whole system must be reformed without proposing any alternatives.

As everyone knows, I have always fought for the rights and protection of victims. I have already suggested to the House that victims should be given a much greater role in our judicial proceedings. I have already submitted that the victims should be represented by lawyers, produce their own witnesses, examine and cross-examine crown and defence witnesses, plead on the evidence, suggest sentences or participate in negotiations; in