

*Government Orders*

the debate on second reading of Bill C-80 and then have a vote?

The reason the government is not proceeding with the second reading of Bill C-80 is that it has now lost the political will to proceed with that bill. It knows it cannot even win a vote from its own caucus on the bill.

The minister went to the École Polytechnique in April where she received 25 boxes of petitions containing 500 names. She promised legislation before the end of May. We never got the bill until the end of June. Now, they are so confused over there, they do not know what the hell they are doing. They are incompetent and disorganized.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** We are now discussing the possibility of putting this motion to the House. I would not want us to get into debating the subject matter, talking about petitions being or not being written on the subject.

On the same point of order, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Mr. Waddell:** Madam Speaker, I raised the point of order and the government's acting House leader got up and made an offer.

I see the Minister of Justice sitting there, silent. I just say that I offered on behalf of the New Democratic Party that we would put the bill through today, in principle. That is second reading of the bill.

We have heard from the Liberal critic who offered the same thing. So we have a case of the opposition offering to put forward the gun control bill, and we have the government apparently filibustering its own bill.

The minister is sitting there, quiet and gutless. She has, in fact, lost control of her own bill to the gun control lobby. That is very tragic.

I see the member for Calgary West. I say to the government again that we are prepared to offer that we deal with second reading in principle of the bill, rather than this motion. The bill can go to committee and it can be studied in committee.

I think that is a pretty good offer. This will be the first time I have ever seen a government turn down an offer to pass its own legislation. Could we please hear the reply from the member, preferably from the Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Russell MacLellan:** Madam Speaker, I refer to what the deputy House leader has said about what is right and what is wrong. What is right is proceeding with second reading of Bill C-80. What is wrong is the way this government is managing its legislation.

I would like to correct the member who was not at the meeting of the Standing Committee of Justice and Solicitor General. He was not there. He misquoted a meeting he did not even attend.

The chairman proposed a pre-study Bill C-80. I would ask the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam to speak for himself, but as far as I was concerned there was not going to be any pre-study. There was not going to be anything but second reading on Bill C-80. If the government was to withdraw Bill C-80, then it would have to take responsibility for that. But under no circumstances was anything going to proceed except second reading of Bill C-80 as far as this party was concerned.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Madam Speaker, if I may be helpful in this debate. I think that the message we want to convey to Canadians is that this is a most important issue with which this House wants to deal.

The government has already put, and the Clerk has already read the Order of the Day, for today. It is Motion No. 23. I would recommend to the government that it withdraw that motion at this time, give us notice that it will withdraw the motion and go to second reading of that bill. We will then co-operate with the government, but we need to have some direction from this government as to what it wants to do in terms of procedure. They propose: We will dispose. We cannot dispose of something when it is so flim-flam and so confused.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Madam Speaker, I do not understand the difficulty in terms of clarity. We are very clear. By calling Motion No. 23, we are setting up a special committee of the House with the powers of a standing committee, the investigatory powers, the budgetary underpinning and everything else to thoroughly investigate the issue of gun control.

What the opposition is asking for is the House to pass at second reading Bill C-80, which would restrict the legislative committee. The legislative committee does not have the mandate to look into the entire situation. It is bound by the principles inherent in Bill C-80 itself.