

Government Orders

The greatest threat of homicide is not at the hands of a stranger. The majority of gun homicides, 86 per cent, are caused by family members, friends or acquaintances. One woman in Canada is killed with by gun every six days, most often in the home by someone she knows. We have evidence that a significant number of offenders act impulsively, suggesting that the simple availability of a gun can determine whether a homicide will occur.

• (1635)

I have tremendous respect and affection for the Minister of Justice but he does not go as far as I would. It is probably because I am an urban member. It is probably because I am a woman. It is probably because I do not have a cool head when it comes to the question of guns and gun control.

Last session I saw a bill brought forward that had many good points. I sat on the legislative committee that dealt with that bill. I saw it watered down until it effectively meant very little. That is why I am so proud to stand on this side of the House with this minister, with this government, to support this bill. It is tough and it is also fair.

I have been to gun clubs where I have walked in and said: "Gentlemen, I am your worst nightmare". No one in the House is more strongly opposed to guns than I am. There are many who are equally strongly opposed, but none more strongly opposed.

I have left those gun clubs with those people perhaps not agreeing with me but understanding my point of view and understanding the point of view that is the most important, that 70 per cent of the people of this country agree with the Minister of Justice. They agree with the Prime Minister. They agree with members on this side of the House because they apply a little intelligence to the equation and they understand the situation.

If we want to talk about legitimate polls, as the member from Calgary appears to be, he could speak to his own minister of justice in Alberta who commissioned a poll. Those of us who know a fair bit about polling know that we can commission polls so that questions will turn up the response we want. That minister was not a particular proponent of this government's law and yet even that poll showed that 62 per cent of the people in Alberta favoured gun control.

Mr. Thompson: Out of 300.

Ms. Clancy: To hon. members opposite, if they want to get their poll done right maybe they should re-educate their attorney general. In Alberta 62 per cent said yes.

Mr. Silye: He is not here to defend himself.

Ms. Clancy: I can only pick on people who are not here. It is too easy to pick on those opposite. If hon. member's opposite

would like to calm down and listen, I would be happy to conclude.

This is a very serious issue. This is a very important issue to the women of this country and to the children of this country. It is very interesting that we talk about guns and their different categories. We talk about automatic weapons, semi-automatic weapons and some of the particularly horrible instruments of mayhem I saw when I travelled with the Toronto police force some months ago.

The hon. member opposite says they defended this country in the second world war. Our guns were turned on an enemy in the second world war that was trying to subjugate an entire culture and an entire belief in democracy. I do not think we should be turning those same weapons on our fellow citizens, which we have been.

Let me get back to my original point, guns, automatic weapons, semi-automatic weapons, those awful instruments of mayhem. Many are going to be banned. Let no one misunderstand that for women in this country an ordinary shotgun in a gun case or hanging over the mantelpiece is an object to be feared. It is an object to worry about for oneself or for one's children, given the circumstances in far too many families.

• (1640)

Again, I am very proud to stand with this government and this minister on the whole issue of gun control. I stand here knowing this is a promise made to the people of Canada, important to the people of Canada. First and foremost, this is a promise that will be kept to the people of Canada.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of gun control has become one of the more emotionally charged debates to be addressed in this House.

As the member for Calgary Centre, I cannot believe how quickly such an important subject has digressed into the realm of us against them, between interest groups, spin doctors, media pundits, urban and rural ridings, men and women. We have lost sight of who we are trying to protect.

Not one person in the House enjoys picking up a newspaper and reading about a man, woman or child being shot by another person. No one enjoys walking the streets at night with a feeling of fear in their stomach. Emotionally we are all on the same wave length and so it is time to start thinking and acting rationally, not just emotionally and politically, as the justice minister said today in question period.

The purpose of the motion we are debating today is to split Bill C-68 in two. One bill would cover the Criminal Code amendments dealing with the use of firearms during the commission of a crime while the second bill would deal with the issue of a national firearms registration system. The rationale is