

[Translation]

Honourable senators, as the tragic date of December 6 approaches, we must remember the 14 innocent young women who left us on that day. Their legacy should be a nation that has taken itself in hand.

[English]

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, I have a question on behalf of the Swampy Cree Tribal Council from in and around The Pas. They represent 10,000 folks up there. They have stated quite clearly that they oppose Bill C-68 and any regulations that are to be defined under that act at a later time. They say this is just another example of the Government of Canada doing something to native people instead of doing what the First Nations governments want. It is now time to change all that.

How does the honourable senator respond to that comment? These people are clearly against the bill because they have not been consulted.

Senator Spivak: From what I have read of the testimony — I did not go everywhere that other senators went; I was at only one meeting in Winnipeg — it seems to me that what the aboriginal peoples want is to be exempt from this legislation.

Senator Stratton: They want to be consulted.

Senator Spivak: Perhaps some of them wish to be exempted. I am sure all of them wish to be consulted. If the minister has not consulted — and apparently, from what I gathered in committee, he has time to consult — the regulations will not be finally established until 2003. He said in his appearance before us that no rights —

Senator Watt: But that is after the fact.

Senator Spivak: Apparently, regulations in law are the same in terms of constitutional and legal value. That is what we have been told. I am not a lawyer. You are the lawyer, and I value your opinion.

However, if they are not suspended — and I asked the minister that question deliberately for that reason — then does the minister not have from now until 2003 to get it right? If he does not get it right, since there is not all that much jurisprudence on *Sparrow*, is it not up to the courts? *Sparrow* is a court decision.

I see Senator Andreychuk wincing. Put me right, please. That is my answer to you.

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, the honourable senator is a pretty hard act to follow.

I must admit that I am a bit over-awed and a bit nervous, for I had really intended to postpone speaking in this historic house until I knew something more about its traditions and the opportunities that it can offer for bettering life for Canadians. However, I really cannot let pass this report from the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs without

imploping my honourable colleagues to defeat these amendments and to pass Bill C-68 as it was sent to us.

Senator St. Germain: On a point of order, is the debate continuing? I have a question for Senator Spivak.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I must recognize the honourable senator.

Senator St. Germain: I am being denied my question.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Order, please.

I have recognized Honourable Senator Milne.

Senator St. Germain: I yield to the honourable senator.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I recognized the Honourable Senator Milne to make a speech. I did not hear the Honourable Senator St. Germain say he wished to ask a question. I saw him stand up. I interpreted that as his wish to participate in the debate. The traditional custom is that one goes from right to left, alternating. For that reason, I recognized the Honourable Senator Milne, thinking that the Honourable Senator St. Germain wished to speak in the debate, and not being aware that he wished to ask a question.

Senator Milne?

Senator Milne: Thank you, honourable senators.

I freely admit that my original reasons for supporting gun control were very emotional reasons. It is now 20 years and six months almost to the very day since my husband reported in the other place on May 28, 1975, that there had been a horrific incident in the Brampton Centennial High School. He reported, and I will quote from Hansard of that day:

Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of grief and shock that I rise to advise the House that about an hour ago there was a major shooting in the town of Brampton —

I still cannot talk about it. I apologize.

— as a result of which a high school teacher and a student were murdered and possibly as many as —

thirteen

— other students injured by the same gunfire. I should like to ask the Solicitor General if he would pledge his efforts to have the —

RCMP

— cooperate in any way they can with the local police relative to the gun issue and perhaps even question whether the government will seriously review gun legislation in Canada?