

Government Orders

minister saw resistance to gun control. It took a lot of courage for him to bring in this legislation.

With today's technology it will also be cheaper than it would have been 15 or 20 years ago. We think those figures are correct.

I know that I am running out of time. My colleague from Edmonton Southwest said his survey showed that 69 per cent of the people in his riding support stricter gun control. In a lot of ways Canadians are ahead of politicians on this one. However, as a government we recognize that we must do this. The Canadian public wants us to do it. The police forces want us to do it. Let us do it for our children. Let us do it for the youth so they will face less crime.

• (1615)

I have three children and I want them to live in a safe society, where they do not feel threatened by someone having a gun. I want them to build a stronger society. We do not want to be Americanized as do some Reform Party members. We want to have a safe country. We do not need guns.

If there is any message I can send today it is that everyone, including the Reform members, should support this bill and give support to the minister. If anything, it should be a tougher bill than what it is now. I hope in the future we can make it more tough because the fewer guns out there, the less crime. It is only logical.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a couple of questions.

I too have spent the last seven or eight weeks touring the country far and wide talking to people at many public meetings. I have also received polls. I received one yesterday regarding registration from the constituents of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, which had 2,807 respondents. Of those respondents, 111 said yes and 2,696 said no.

That is what came from that riding. The member of Parliament has received that poll from those constituents. Is that member of Parliament going to be allowed to represent his people? After all, the polls he is getting certainly do not indicate what the minister and other members are claiming.

Are we aware that the Prime Minister received 200 resolutions from municipalities in the province of Manitoba opposing the minister's gun law? We have not heard anything about that, but I know they were delivered to the Prime Minister of Canada from the province of Manitoba.

Tons and tons of petitions are being tabled. I have managed to put in over several thousand names from all over the country because some members evidently do not want to table these petitions. They have come from all parts of the country. The

latest one was from Manitoba and was signed by somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1,400 individuals, including 400 or 500 women who signed it on special pink paper so it would be recognized. They are opposing this bill.

The hon. member for Burlington was with me at a meeting in Kamloops. The place was packed full. There might have been 300 or 350 people there. They asked that member to send a message to the minister. They called for a vote and they all stood opposing the gun proposals.

For heaven's sake, when you see these kinds of things—and everywhere I go I see them—and you get them from your own members' ridings, where it says that 96 per cent oppose gun registration, where in the world are you dreaming up these figures that you keep talking about?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. The Chair recognizes that this is very controversial and that there are very strongly held views on both sides of the debate. However I would remind members on both sides of the House to always direct their interventions through the Chair, through the Speaker, and avoid referring directly to one another as "you".

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that. I forgot for a moment that you were there. I will not do that again. But as you say, it is very easy to get worked up.

I have attended over 19 public meetings. I have personally interviewed thousands of people and I have listened to them. I did not encourage them in any way, fashion or form. I asked: Are you familiar with the proposals? They said yes. I asked: Are you in favour? There was an overwhelming no. This is mostly grassroots. I do not have time for a lot of the elite, as do some of the ministers. I am talking to grassroots individuals throughout the country. They do not want it. It is loud and clear from every indication.

Check the petitions that are tabled and tell me how many petitions are in favour of this and how many are against. Mr. Speaker, you will be pleasantly surprised.

Mr. Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, on any given day on any issue I could probably get 1,000 people out in my riding. If a Reformer comes to speak in my riding, I can get 1,000 people to protest against them because of their stance. It is not hard to get 300 people up against it.

• (1620)

However, that is not the issue here. The issue is that overall, the polls coming in show again and again that the majority of Canadians are supporting this. There are going to be some people who oppose it because it will be in their interests to do so. These are the hunters and the people who sell guns. It is in their interests to oppose this.