

Government Orders

I do not agree with either of his questions. He said himself that there are a lot of issues that are not addressed by the bill. That was the question raised by his colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce this morning when he asked the minister if the committee was going to be restricted in its hearings to the narrow confines of what is in the bill.

Her answer was no, that it would be given a broader mandate to hear concerns of Canadians relating to the whole issue of the regulations and the bill.

I think the minister is not backing off. If she wanted to, she could quietly let this bill sit in the back corner and not mention it. It would die on the *Order Paper* eventually. That is not going to happen.

By setting up this committee, Canadians are going to be heard. If the hon. member thinks we are making a mistake by reacting to concerns expressed to the minister, I would suggest that he is wrong. There have been legitimate concerns expressed. There have been questions raised.

In answers to those questions and concerns, the minister and her motion say: "Let's listen to Canadians." I think that is what democracy is all about. Let's hear what Canadians have to say. We are going to end up with a better bill for doing it.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, the minister is on the hook because she made a promise to the students at École Polytechnique in April.

She said she would bring forward a bill. She said she would push for extended gun control. December 6 is the anniversary of the massacre, and she knows she will be subject to questions in the House of Commons on why she has not done anything. She is now going to say it was sent for study in committee. It is dishonest and it is pathetic and the students at the École Polytechnique and other Canadians will hold her accountable for that. As I said before, it is the first failure of this minister in her new portfolio.

• (1620)

I want to let the hon. member off the hook by asking him if he would confirm a newspaper report not too long ago which said that 30—I notice the member today said: "Don't take instructions from the parliamentary secretary. He is liable to lead you astray".

Mr. Karygiannis: Get your runs in there.

Mr. Waddell: Get the runs in there. Would he confirm that 30 Conservative MPs have indicated that they would not support the bill? If he cannot confirm the number, could he tell us how many of his colleagues do not support the bill and could he explain his own position, does he or does he not support Bill C-80?

Mr. Fee: Madam Speaker, I am somewhat amused by the question because the most common criticism we are getting at home in the media is that we blindly follow the leader and do not think for ourselves. Now we are being criticized because some other reporter says we are not following blindly.

I cannot confirm how many members over here said they would or would not support it. I said in my speech, if you were listening and I am sure you were, that some serious problems have been expressed to me by a large number of constituents. Yes I have a problem with this bill in its present form. I am very pleased that the minister is going out to listen to Canadians to hear their concerns.

The senseless tragedy that happened last year in Montreal affected all Canadians. It could not help but do so. I am almost tempted to accuse the hon. member of exploiting that but it would be a terrible charge and I do not want to do it. I was going to refer to it in my speech but I do not think we should be drafting regulations and laws specifically as a result of one tragedy. We owe it to those people, and the families of those victims, to come up with a law that is going to be effective in the long term. We would be wrong to push something through hastily rather than make sure it is well thought out and has the support of people who can make sure the law works.

I think it is better to take a couple of extra months, do it properly, and make sure we have support of firearms groups.

There was an amendment introduced today that tried to put a time limit on a committee. I am quite prepared to support that because I do think we have to get ahead with this. We have to get this committee working, we have to get the report in, we have to act on it for the very reasons that have been stated.