

today and we can get it into committee so we can study the real bill in committee.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, there is total confusion in the government in regard to this very important and serious matter.

Members will recall that we have Bill C-80 which deals with the gun control legislation. We also have Motion No. 13 which dates back to June 20, 1990. I guess the government was getting cold feet at that time and wanted to refer the whole thing to a committee during the summer. It never proceeded with that motion, of course.

Now we have another motion tabled 48 hours ago which calls for a standing committee, or a committee with standing committee powers, composed of eight members. So, we have three items: a bill and two motions.

The *Projected Order of Business* today called for the bill to be called at 11 o'clock. That is second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff in consequence thereof. We find now the government has changed its view and is going to call the motion.

We do not order Business of the House. The government does that. What we are trying to find out is exactly what is in the government's mind here. If it wants to debate a motion that sends the subject matter of gun control to a committee, because it cannot handle it, because its legislation is faulty, or because it cannot take the heat on the issue, then I think the House must know. If the government proceeds with the motion, then we will all know that what it is trying to do is pawn off the issue to a standing committee of the House.

However, it cannot call Motion No. 13 any more, Madam Speaker, if it calls this Motion No. 23 today. I hope it will give us an undertaking that it will not call the principle of this whole issue, that is Bill C-80. If it did that, we would have a committee looking at the subject matter and we would have the House of Commons looking at the principle of the bill.

I have a difficult situation here to resolve, Madam Speaker. If the government gives me the undertaking that it will not call the bill, then fine, it can proceed with

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the motion. However, if it is going to give the committee to be struck the object of the bill, that is the whole subject matter, to study if Motion No. 23 is adopted, then it cannot, in my view, have it both ways. It must give us an undertaking that its bill is dead. Therefore, it will not be called back to the House and it will be withdrawn.

Mr. MacLellan: Madam Speaker, I would just like to follow up on what my friend from Port Moody—Coquitlam and the member for Ottawa—Vanier have said.

This is a very peculiar situation. As the member for Ottawa—Vanier said, the government brought forward a motion on June 20 to have a pre-study on this question of gun control. Then on June 26 it brought forward Bill C-80, the bill to deal with this question of gun control. It has been sitting without action until the present time.

Yesterday, the government brought forward a second motion where it wants to refer the matter to a special committee. The *Order Paper* this morning stated that we were going to be dealing with second reading of Bill C-80. Now, we are back to Motion No. 23.

The government wants to kill its own legislation. It wants to refer it to a special committee which will not be able to finish studying the bill, and have it printed and translated until well into the new year. It is not going to be able to bring forward the legislation before the government's own intention to prorogue the House.

This is absolutely unprecedented. It is absolutely unnecessary. It is incredible that the government would make such a botch of its own procedure and destroy what is basically a fair bill. It is perhaps not perfect, but it is a bill that can be amended at second reading and in committee, and one which the House wants to get on with.

As the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam has said, we are prepared to give swift passage on second reading to get the bill to committee, so we can hear the views of all concerned, instead of delaying it and, as the government wants to do, killing it.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I have been a party to some of the discussions that have gone on in a second-hand way in terms of the justice committee and in a direct way in terms of House leaders' meetings.