

*Government Orders*

I found it extraordinary, a sad and humiliating sight, to see this minister rise and in fact filibuster against her own bill by bringing in this ridiculous and farcical motion. What are we doing? We are sending the material to a committee, when we see on the *Order Paper* that we may later debate Bill C-80. If we pass that, it will go to another committee.

I do not know why the minister just did not say that she lost the battle and does not have support among her colleagues for her bill. I half expected the minister to get up and offer her resignation, but she did not do that. As a matter of fact, she did something worse.

The Minister got up and made reference to her meeting with the university students in Montreal. On April 10, 1990, she was at the engineering school at the École Polytechnique, the place where 14 women were gunned down by Marc Lépine last December. She was given 25 boxes of petitions. Here is an article about it by David Johnston in the *Montreal Gazette* and a picture. Those petitions bore the names of 516,487 Canadians calling for tougher gun control laws. It is now up to 700,000 people calling for this law and, as she mentioned in her speech today, she took the petitions and said she sympathized with these people. Such hypocrisy, Madam Speaker. Such hypocrisy on behalf of the minister.

Why did she not just tell the truth? Why did she not just go down to Montreal and to the other parts of the country and tell people the truth? If she had been honest, she would have said: "Look, I lost this battle in cabinet. I cannot get the support of the Conservative back bench on this bill and, therefore, I cannot proceed with the bill."

Instead, the government tried to cover it up to try to make it look like it was making progress in this bill. She said: "I am frustrated by the lack of progress in the bill." Well, the government controls the agenda. It could get a Hibernia bill through like that. It got the GST through—at least the House—like that.

The government controls the agenda and she comes forward saying: "I am frustrated at the lack of progress." The government then takes the bill, rejects our support of the bill, and puts a motion to committee that we will examine the substance of this bill. But we will not have voted in principle on the bill.

It is one pure incompetence on the part of the government, and my friend from Cape Breton—The Sydneys outlined perfectly how there are two motions and another bill on the *Order Paper*. There is incompetence here. But, worse than incompetence, there is a lack of political will.

The minister was faced with her first tough problem and she collapsed. I feel very sad for her. I feel very sad for the people she talked to in Montreal and for the 700,000 people who signed that petition.

I had hoped that this minister would be different and a different sort of person than her mentor, the Prime Minister. I thought she might be somewhat more honest and somewhat more straightforward. The first big test comes and she is just a mini-Mulroney. She has taken after the boss. I guess that is the price one has to pay to be in the Prime Minister's favour.

She says she wants her members to speak on this. Well, bring them in and have them speak. We are waiting. Bring them in. We were prepared to let Bill C-80 go through. I find that extraordinary. The opposition offers that the bill will go through in principle and then the government says: "No, no. We want to bring in our members to filibuster our own bill."

I know it is not an easy problem. The minister said that. It is a difficult issue because rural Canada has some difficulties with gun control, but the answer is not to cave in completely. The answer is to take the bill, the real bill, the real stuff, get it into committee, and amend the bill so that it is workable and so that we can have a workable system of gun control.

I challenge the minister to go back to the engineering students in Montreal and tell them: "I copped out on you. I did not have the guts and the political will when it came down to it to really press for my bill. I put a farcical procedure. I sent this thing off to committee where it will disappear, a special committee hearing on to the infinite future. The House will be prorogued and it will be gone."

The minister seems to think that she can bring it back. She has given her opposition a tremendous victory here and it is a real defeat for the minister. I say that sadly because I had hoped better for this minister and I think the country was expecting better.

I just want to give a little bit of the history of firearms control so that we can put it into context. In 1978 the current gun control law was passed in amendment to the Criminal Code by the House of Commons. There were