

*Government Orders*

toward various gun control measures. The survey reported that 90 per cent supported a law requiring all firearms to be registered.

In British Columbia 88 per cent of the people support strong gun control. In Alberta 83 per cent of the people support gun control. Virtually all Canadians, 96 per cent, support increased penalties for the use of a firearm during the commission of a crime. Part of that bill also increases the crime whenever a firearm is used in the commission of a crime.

Seventy-five per cent wanted restricted access to ammunition. Sixty-seven per cent supported a law preventing civilians from owning handguns.

There is a whole list of the polls done. It goes on and on. I could probably go on. There was a survey done in Alberta recently which said that 64 per cent of Albertans support a national firearms registry.

This was a poll done by Alberta's minister of justice, Mr. Evans, who said that he was surprised by the results of this poll. An Angus Reid poll was done in the fall of 1994 in which 70 per cent of Canadians favoured tougher gun controls.

I can go on and on and cite more polls but it is pretty evident that Canadians support strong gun control. If one looks at the groups that are supporting gun control, there are incredible groups that are saying they want gun control.

For example, on August 25, 1994 at its 89th annual conference the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police passed six resolutions that support strengthened firearms control measures. Mayors of B.C., mayors of some of the people in the Reform Party, said they want stricter gun control. Eighteen mayors throughout British Columbia representing 1.7 million people said they want stronger gun control. This is coming from the mayors of municipalities.

It is quite evident that groups right across Canada, whether it is the mayors, the Canadian police chiefs or other groups including community groups, have said they want stricter gun control. As the Reform Party always says, we are listening to those Canadians. We are listening and we are responding. We believe we need to listen. The difficulty for Reform Party members is that if they do not support this bill, they will be against the majority in their own ridings that wants stricter gun controls.

● (1600)

I know we have to be careful in using statistics because they can be used in misleading ways. I want to share some statistics with the Canadian public. A recent survey showed that guns were used in 42 per cent of murders of women by their spouses.

One woman in Canada is killed with a gun every six days. Most often she is killed in her own home and almost always she is killed by someone she knows. That is quite a revealing statistic.

There is another statistic that we should look at closely. Over 80 per cent of the rifles and shotguns were legally owned at the time of the shooting. Is that not an incredible statistic? The members of the third party say: "It is the criminals that are committing the crimes". It shows that over 80 per cent of the rifles and shotguns were legally owned by those people at the time of the shooting. What does that tell us? It sends a very strong message when 80 per cent of the rifles and shotguns were legally owned at the time of the shooting. We have to take action.

In 1991 there were a total of 1,445 deaths involving firearms. Of those, 19 per cent were homicides, 4 per cent were accidental deaths and 77 per cent were suicides. In 1992, 26 per cent of all robberies involved firearms. This represents a gradual decline since 1977 when it was 39 per cent, the year before stricter gun control measures were passed by Parliament.

As the result of stricter gun controls we have cut robberies down from 39 per cent to 26 per cent. We heard the same arguments in 1977 when the Liberal government, proposed by Minister Ron Basford, passed legislation on stricter gun control. The same arguments are coming out. In looking back the statistics show we did the right thing. In 15 or 20 years we will look back and say we did the right thing now as well.

In 1992 there were 732 homicides. Of those 732, 34 per cent were committed with firearms. That is a serious problem.

We can compare our gun laws with those in other countries. Unfortunately we do not have a comprehensive study that compares countries that have stricter gun controls and those that have less restrictions.

We do have one very comprehensive study that took the example of two cities which were within a 100 to 150 mile radius. The study looked at what happens in crime in those two cities. The two cities were Seattle and Vancouver, the city which I am from and represent, Vancouver South. It looked at these two cities because there were a lot of similarities in geography, climate, make-up and population. It was a study done between 1980 through 1986 in order to investigate the associations among handgun regulations, assaults and other crimes, as well as homicides.

The two cities are similar in many ways. They share common geography, as I said, climate history and both cities have a comparable level of schooling and have almost identical rates of unemployment and ethnic diversity.