

tion of what I understand this means, and we support this motion.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, you will be surely forgiving if we seem cynical about the motives of the minister and the government.

The minister says that she is serious and that her party looks upon this as one of the most important issues to come before this House in this Parliament, but the government is obviously not treating it as a serious measure.

The minister, as she admitted herself, received the petition from the students in Montreal. She brought forward a motion on June 20 to put this in a pre-study. Then she brought forward the bill on June 26. Nothing was done on the bill. This is the first day of debate on the whole question of gun control since June 26. This is following yesterday when we were told that there was going to be a second motion. Then, last night, we were told that, no, we were going to proceed with second reading of Bill C-80. Then this morning, after the second reading of Bill C-80 was stated on the *Order Paper*, we were told that, no, we were going to go ahead with Motion No. 23, asking ask for a special committee study on this question.

If this is a serious issue to the government, why has it treated this issue so cavalierly? Why has it delayed in bringing this motion before the House? The bill to privatize Petro-Canada, Bill C-84, was introduced around the same time. That was brought forward as soon as we came back. That has almost finished committee hearings. Yet, we have not had even second reading on this bill. It is obvious that the government was serious about privatizing Petro-Canada but it is not serious on getting new gun control legislation.

For the minister to say that this is a serious issue with the government, it is really stretching the point of the true belief of the government. She says hopefully that Bill C-80 will yet come to second reading. We have made the offer.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): I offered to pass it today.

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Mr. MacLellan: Good, that is great. This is going to be really something. We will have two committees at the same time studying the same question. That is going to be peachy-keen. Talk about a boondoggle. The government is digging a deeper hole for itself by the minute.

The minister said that she hoped that second reading will come. The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam and myself offered to put this through second reading today so that it could get to a committee. The government turned that down. Now the minister wants to bring this to second reading, presumably, to have it before a committee and yet we have the special committee which is starting before second reading.

• (1240)

Obviously, the minister is not going to have a speech at second reading because she read it today. In her speech she defended Bill C-80, yet she is now in the process of killing Bill C-80. That is exactly what is going to happen.

We all know the worst kept secret in Ottawa is that the government wants to prorogue. Of course, it wants to prorogue. It wants to get the Opposition out of the House of Commons. It does not want any flak. The problem with the government is that it is so bad that Question Periods are backed up for both parties until some time in February. The fact is, if it did everything right, that there would still be enough material for Question Period into March. But the government wants to prorogue.

Let us look at this situation, this special committee. If the special committee is set up, we have to advertise it. We have to set up the committee. We have to give people a chance to prepare their presentations. Presumably, the very earliest that this special committee could report back would be probably the end of January. It must prepare the report. The committee's report must be translated before it can actually be tabled in the House. We are talking mid-February before this committee could finish, presumably, at the earliest.

Is the minister prepared then to give us the undertaking that we will go through second reading, report stage, third reading and introduction into the Senate before the House prorogues? I think not. I would be interested to hear whether or not the minister will give us that