

Government Orders

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to make a personal plea. I would like to point out that, by the peculiar nature of the pension plan that members of the House of Commons have, his widow, whom he married in 1977, after the death of his first wife and to whom he was married for 13 years, will not receive a pension because he married her after he had ceased to be a member of Parliament. I would hope this House, recognizing the injustice that is being done, would take the appropriate steps to ensure that the survivor's benefit is given to his wife because they were together for many years.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would ask the House to join me in a moment of silence while we remember our former colleague.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence for one minute.*]

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt (Mr. Karygiannis)—Refugees; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam (Mr. Waddell)—Indian Affairs; the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Mr. Milliken)—Bill C-69.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BILL C-80

REFERENCE OF SUBJECT MATTER TO SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre) (p. 15566); and the amendment of Mr. MacLellan (p.15584).

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to address this motion. Let me just recap where we are on this matter.

You will recall that we were talking about gun control and, as a reaction to the terrible tragedy on December 6, 1989, almost a year ago, and also after some pressure from other sources, the government brought in Bill C-80, to amend the Criminal Code to stiffen the control of guns in Canada.

This bill was given first reading in the House of Commons, and we were waiting to consider it in principle. Normally what happens is that the bill is tabled, then we have a debate at second reading on the principle of the bill, and then it goes to committee. At committee, we hear from numerous witnesses who make suggestions for changes in the bill, amendments are made, the bill is brought back to the House for third reading and then the bill goes to the Senate and, after Royal Assent, it becomes the law of Canada.

What has happened today is really quite extraordinary. The Minister of Justice stood up in the House and said that she was not going to bring in Bill C-80. She said that instead she would bring in a motion stating that the subject matter of this bill be referred to a committee for pre-study. That is extraordinary. I rose, on behalf of my party, and the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys rose, on behalf of the Liberal party, to say that we were prepared to have a short debate today. We would adopt the government's own bill and send it to committee, but the government refused our offer. The government is in fact filibustering and rejecting its own bill.

• (1530)

Let there be no doubt about it that this represents a major defeat for the new Minister of Justice. She has lost a major battle in cabinet. It means in fact that she has been defeated by the gun lobby.

There is a group of people in Canada that does not like gun control and does not want gun control. They are like the American gun lobby and are now being more and more effective in blocking gun control. That does not include not all people who possess guns. There is also a group—I think the majority—of people in rural areas, in gun clubs and in hunting and fishing clubs, who accept gun control. This is very important. But they want a workable system of gun control that is not too bureaucratic but makes sense, and they have made a number of suggestions as to how that can be done. I will come back to that a little later in my speech.