

Government Orders

or vote for their individual interests rather than the collective interests of the people of Canada.

• (1545)

As an aboriginal person I have some concerns. As a member representing per capita probably the largest number of gun owners, I have some concerns. I will convey them to the Minister of Justice to ensure that they are heard.

I think the people in my riding of Nunatsiak are ready to support the Minister of Justice to ensure that Canada is a safer place to live. Canada can be made a safer place to live.

I suggest that hon. members listen to their constituents. If the majority say to support the gun control measures then they should listen to them.

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I strongly object to the allegations made by the hon. member with regard to prejudice. I would ask that he withdraw them. Because we say all Canadians should be treated equally, I do not think that is prejudice. I would ask him to withdraw that.

The Deputy Speaker: The member is welcome to say that as a response.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the member was prejudiced. I said that the attitude put out by some members is prejudicial. When I quoted Voltaire that prejudice is what fools use for reason, an awful lot of things can be hidden under some words. I did not say that the member was prejudiced. If I did not say that the member was prejudiced, then I have no reason to withdraw my comments.

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I really do not want to pursue this any further.

Is the hon. member going to vote for or against this legislation? Has he consulted his constituents as we have? We have done surveys. We found that initially, over 80 per cent of the people surveyed knew virtually nothing about this legislation. As they became more informed, opposition to this bill rose to as high as 90 per cent.

They realized how this was going to put society more at risk. They realized how this was going to give criminals access to firearms that they did not previously have. They realized how this was going to tie up the police in some useless paperwork. They realized how this was going to be a tax imposition upon them, how it would destroy more jobs and would put more young people out on the streets who probably would get into more trouble and put us more at risk.

They began to see that this was a useless bureaucratic political manoeuvre to try to put something across on the Canadian people. It would make them think the government was doing something to make society safer when in fact it is not.

As the member quotes these polls, he had better go back and find out exactly what he is doing. A very narrow view is being expressed here.

The hon. member just said that only some people of certain race subsistence hunt. That is not true. It is absolutely false. Many people in this country appreciate nature. They use handguns in many ways besides killing people. The allegation he made that guns are only for killing people is absolutely ridiculous. I do not know where this member is coming from. There are many other uses for guns. I do not accept that argument.

The member made many other statements that were not true. I ask the Canadian public to really look at this question in depth. Examine what this government has put forward. It is a convoluted complex bill and cannot be supported in its present form.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and answers has expired. The member has not had a ruling on the validity of his motion. It will be provided as quickly as it can. It is being studied very carefully.

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

• (1550)

I rise today to speak to Bill C-68, legislation which addresses the fundamental right of all Canadians to a safe, non-violent, non-threatening society. I am speaking in support of legislative reforms carefully crafted and presented by the Minister of Justice involving amendments to the Criminal Code and the creation of a new firearms act.

For many years Canadians have watched in horror the increasing use of handguns, assault weapons and rifles in the commission of crimes. In recent years our North American society has become increasingly immune to daily doses of violence, death and injury. Television newscasts and videos feed Canadian viewers a steady stream of carnage. Some of us are shocked; many have become numb as we grow accustomed to the daily onslaught.

In the United States thousands of people are killed each year by handguns. Hundreds of thousands are injured and many are permanently disabled. Yet Americans strangely cling to the notion of a frontier mentality and the right to settle arguments with a gun. A new handgun is produced every 20 seconds in the United States to feed a voracious demand.

Our society is awash in American imagery and attitudes. The U.S. media has slowly changed our long established tradition of law, order and peaceful tolerance. The locked doors and barred windows of the United States have crept north as has the American fascination with handguns.