

Gun Control

of the proliferation of handguns in that society. The Rambo mentality is alive and well. We do not want to see that in Canada.

• (1710)

By contrast, in the U.K. there are far tougher gun-control laws than we have here in Canada. What are the statistics? Hand guns were involved in 10,728 deaths in the U.S. in 1979. In England it was eight. I think that figure speaks for itself.

I would point out as well that Canadians themselves are calling for tougher gun-control legislation. A Gallup poll conducted in February of 1982 shows that 70 per cent of those questioned believed the gun-control law should be made more effective. I say more effective. Certainly these laws should not be weakened.

Mr. Witer: What about the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton)?

Mr. Robinson: The Conservative Government has indicated that it is prepared to examine gun control laws. The Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Redway) is present and I want to commend him for the work he has done in prodding his Government into taking some action. Yet his efforts have fallen on deaf ears. The Conservative Government has refused to take any action whatsoever to tighten up gun-control legislation. In February of 1986 the Hon. Member for York East asked the then Minister of Justice what action he was going to take with respect to the recommendation of the coroner's inquest into the death of Allan Boyarski. That man had purchased two hand guns less than five months after he was convicted of illegally carrying another hand gun. The Minister, rising up to his full height, said:

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to discuss the specific case—but amendments to the firearm control provisions of the Criminal Code—have been under consideration by the Department of Justice—they are to be discussed this week—The hon. gentleman's concerns will be looked into then.

They may have been looked into but no action was taken.

An Hon. Member made reference to the Hon. Member for Skeena. He is reflecting the views of many of his constituents and bringing forward a Private Members' Bill, which he has every right to do, reflecting the serious concerns of the people of Skeena. He does an outstanding job. The fact that I happen to disagree with the contents of his Bill is neither here or there. I say again, he has done a terrific job of representing his constituents on this important question, but it is the Conservatives who are in government. It is not up to the Hon. Member for Skeena to pass legislation, any more than it is up to me. Why has the Government failed to act?

The Hon. Member for York East was at it again in October of 1986. He pointed out that the Minister had said the previous spring that he was going to be reviewing gun-control legislation. He asked the Minister when he was going to take action. What did the Minister say? Indeed, a review was taking place. He hoped to have the recommendations in his

hands very shortly. Undoubtedly that would lead to legislation. Since then more coroner's juries have recommended tightening gun-control laws. More people have died through the use of firearms. More children have been killed accidentally through the use of firearms. How much longer is the Government going to wait? How much longer is he going to refuse to heed the plea of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, coroner's juries, members of his own caucus, before the Minister finally takes action to tighten gun-control laws?

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the contribution made in this area of the law by another Member of this House, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand). He has been subject to a great deal of criticism as a result of the leadership role he took in the search for tough gun-control legislation. The Hon. Member introduced legislation which in no way impinges on the right of hunters to continue to hunt safely as they see fit. Indeed, as Solicitor General he was responsible for the adoption of the original gun control legislation. It is members from all Parties, Members such as the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East, Members such as the Hon. Member for York East, and myself as an NDP Member, who again appeal to the Government to take action. Let it recognize that the time is long overdue for effective gun-control legislation. The evaluation report of the committee that looked into the existing laws found that the number of firearms charges has increased. The severity of sentences for firearms offences has increased. Most important, murder by firearms as a percentage of all murders has declined since the new legislation came into effect.

As a society which values human life, surely we have an obligation to ensure that we have the most effective gun-control laws in this country. That is the purpose of my Bill and I hope at the very least, if it is not adopted at second reading today, that it will be sent to the appropriate standing committee where the subject matter can be studied carefully and thoughtfully. Canadians can be given an opportunity to appear before that committee to voice their concerns. As a result of that process, perhaps we can adopt effective gun-control legislation.

Mr. Vince Dantzer (Okanagan North): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity this evening to speak on Bill C-207. The Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) talks about loony Bills. This is a loony Bill. However, it does touch on matters of real interest not only to my constituents but to all Canadians. This is so because gun control affects the very fabric of our rights and freedoms in this democratic society. It also touches on issues of public safety, indeed, life and death. It is no wonder that when changes to Canada's gun-control legislation are under consideration, there is a very lively debate.

It remains a controversial subject and continues to inspire sharply divided opinion. Under this Bill, the Hon. Member proposes to toughen the system by replacing acquisition certificates with possession certificates. Just recently, as the