

Government Orders

registered the registration went astray. It was also found that it was only useful if the serial number were registered. Many weapons were not registered by serial number but by model number. Even if the law-abiding citizen took the time to do that it was a failure. It was found that many people never registered, did not comply. As well it was found that the cost was unjustified. It was much more expensive than expected. That is a very important issue in these days of financial restraint.

New Zealand abandoned its registration system and went to a system of licensing much like a pilot's licence. An individual who wanted a weapon had to be registered. It depended on the level of use whether or not the individual went for the high or lower level. There is a lesson to be learned by Canada from the experiences in New Zealand.

Second is the overall registration of firearms. I made a comment on national radio that Australia had tried registration of firearms. I got a blast from the consul's office saying that I said the wrong thing. It was wrong. It was not tried overall in Australia. It was only tried in various Australian states.

The state that closely resembles Canada is the state of Victoria. In 1984 Victoria decided that all firearms had to be registered. There were some massacres, some murders in Australia. Public opinion was inflamed just like it is in Canada today. Registration was to be the answer, according to Australian politicians.

In 1984 registration was to be phased in over a three-year period. The Australian police resolved that the spread of firearms should be contained. They actually had a very specific way to contain firearms. The initial statement made by the Australian police was that no home should have more than three firearms. Computerized registration would be the mechanism to justify that. If a home had just cause it could contain more than three firearms.

The resulting legislation did not include the three-firearm position. It was only registration of firearms. They moved off the three-firearm position into registration. The police still said they thought it would help.

Registration took place. Interestingly enough they found that it was very much more expensive than they had thought. Now we are getting into the more modern computer age which is very expensive. They found in terms of compliance that 58.9 per cent of the population complied but 41.1 per cent did not comply. Worse and most condemnatory of the process was that there was no effect whatever on criminal misuse of firearms. They had good statistics to follow it through. For the same three reasons New Zealand abandoned its firearm registration. Australia did the same.

I obtained the conclusions of the firearm registration officer through access to information. Generally they are not publicly available. The officer charged with the responsibility was asked whether he had done a good job. In summary he said: "I do not believe registration is the answer to the problem. I would therefore recommend that firearms registration be forthwith abolished and together with the firearms consultation committee a far-reaching, effective and proper system of education be introduced as a prerequisite to obtaining a shooter's licence". He went on to describe a system very much like that of New Zealand.

• (1705)

That country is not strange and foreign to Canada. It is a country that is parallel to Canada. It tried it and it flopped. What happened to the firearms officer when he presented the report? He was fired. The report was buried and the political masters carried on with registration and registration persists today.

I have a political message for members across the way. In New South Wales, Australia, a Labour government tried to put through very similar, draconian firearms legislation as we have in Canada today. This is the part that should change their minds. National opinion polls are 70 per cent for the government. They fought an election on the basis of the issue and the Labour government was ousted from New South Wales. Prime Minister Unsworth announced that he would not be standing for leadership of the parliamentary Labour party. "Guns cost me", he said. "Clearly as leader I must accept the major proportion of the blame for this defeat, particularly in terms of my decision on the gun issue".

What happens if a Canadian's lifestyle is taken away and turned into political activism? Members of the Liberal Party have no idea what it is doing when it does this to the lifestyle of Canadians. They may get individuals in urban areas to give them all kinds of support. However, when they find out that registration will be expensive, will affect only law-abiding individuals and will have no impact on criminal misuse, they will do what they did in New South Wales.

It is not necessary. It is absolutely incredibly stupid. I would simply say that we should split the bill. Let us have crime control but let us not have registration, or it is gonzo to the Liberals.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents to give my full support to Bill C-68. It is a bill to restrict the availability of guns and thereby reduce the number of crimes with guns.

It is an undeniable fact that where guns and ammunition are less available there are less crimes with guns. Where guns and ammunition are more difficult to obtain, there are less crimes with guns. It is not no crimes with guns but less crime with guns.