

the licences will be able to spot people with schizoid personalities or anti-social tendencies and prevent their having access to weapons, thus lessening the incidence of homicide. It is difficult to see how this could be done in practice without denying registration to a large portion of the population.

Turning to the other group involved in the study I have just mentioned, the researchers found that before committing a crime there was nothing in their behaviour that would enable them to be distinguished from others. They conformed to normal patterns of behaviour to the extent that they would obviously be able to acquire a firearm through a licensing agency without a great deal of trouble. In other words, a screening program would be almost impossible to administer. Irrational behaviour among members of the latter group mentioned is almost impossible to spot.

Some people have maintained that access to a gun is a prerequisite to crime. But shootings occur in the case of only half the murders committed in Canada, and if guns are unobtainable it is probable that most of the murders which involved shooting would have been committed in some other way. I would point out that, as things stand, Canada's gun laws are already quite restrictive. The premise that even stricter gun laws would reduce the crime rate should be seriously questioned. It seems obvious to me that stricter gun laws will not do much to prevent violent crime. Indeed, they will likely have only a negative impact on the crime rate. For such measures to be effective, it would be necessary to abolish the use of guns completely, and it is doubtful that this could ever be enforced.

There has been some discussion about the right of individuals to be in a position to defend themselves. I would remind hon. members that a police force cannot be in all places at all times. Only a relatively small number of our citizens can be involved in actual police work. When Hitler came to power in Germany, he took away the guns from his people and whenever he occupied a country he took guns away from its population. My information is that the U.S.S.R. private citizens have no freedom to own guns. Even the few who are able to use guns to hunt for food, for example, must return them directly after use to the local equivalent of commissar or military post.

On the other hand, there is the attitude adopted in Switzerland where every able-bodied man is expected to be proficient in the use of guns and where there is extensive private ownership of guns. Surely, there is a moral in this. It is that totalitarian countries largely restrict the use of guns to the police force and the military, while democracies rely on a different approach, one which encourages citizens to use guns and to own them. I submit that in any discussion about the use of guns, this aspect should be considered.

If it is suggested that the restriction of gun ownership would prevent or minimize death by guns, why not consider the case of automobiles, motor cycles and snowmobiles? All these vehicles cause many times the number of deaths that guns do. The way to prevent such deaths would obviously be to ban these machines altogether, but no government would suggest doing so, simply because they are too much a part of modern living.

#### *Measures Against Crime*

Turning to the bill itself, let me say there is obviously much to be desired. The role to be played by the local registrar interests me somewhat. Presumably, he will be expected to spot the individual of unsound mind, one who might have a tendency to act irrationally, or one who is known or suspected to be a criminal. This I suggest, is a very exacting and onerous assignment. As usual, the registrar will fall between two stools; either he will be too lenient and give out licences freely, destroying the value of the licence and the purpose to which the bill is directed, or, if he is too strict, problems will be created the other way.

Take the case of a man known to have a criminal record, for instance. It is assumed that such an individual has paid his debt to society, that he has become a reformed citizen and is consequently entitled to the rights enjoyed by all other citizens. I can well imagine a registrar who takes his work seriously, phoning the local police office to find out whether or not a particular individual has a police record or whether he is known to the police as being a person of unsound mind. In the event, the local police as being a force might well become the ultimate arbiter in deciding whether or not an individual should receive a licence.

Then, again, the provision that an applicant must find two individuals who will permit their names to be used as a guarantee that the individual seeking a licence is of sound mind, and so on, gives rise to some reflection. The legislation describes these guarantors in clause 106.1(3)(c) as "members of a class or classes of person from time to time prescribed by the regulations." They must indicate that they have known the applicant for at least two years, that they have read the application and that to the best of their knowledge and belief there is no reason to believe the applicant is unfit to be in possession of firearms or ammunition. This is much more complex than the situation regarding passports. Furthermore, the local registrar of guns will certainly become a local czar.

● (1530)

There is another aspect of the bill that is not clear and which, presumably, will be dealt with by regulation. I refer to whether or not automatic shotguns or rifles will fall into the restricted class. I have said that fully half the rifles and shotguns that are now sold have an automatic capability, even though, generally speaking, for sporting purposes or bird and game shooting the number of shots that can be fired at any one time is a maximum of three. Many millions of these guns will not become restricted weapons.

Concern has been expressed by gun clubs, and members of clubs dedicated to shooting, that the new regulations will tend to put these clubs out of business. Even if the legislation does not do this, it will certainly make their life more complicated, and understandably they are quite upset and unhappy over this legislation. So often these people are community-minded and in most cases theirs is a worthy activity in society. Another group of individuals that seems to be hard hit by this law is the gun collectors who by and large, so far as I am aware, have not contributed to the crime statistics of this country in any way. Gun collecting seems to be a hobby with many people, a sort of link with the past, and in this day and age it is sometimes used as a hedge against inflation. I am told that the United Kingdom has reasonably sound regulations regarding people who collect guns as a hobby.