

Criminal Code

Crowe, like many sheep owners and cow-calf owners, thinks that a gun can be legal today and banned tomorrow . . . "done by some faceless Ottawa bureaucrat." He seeks gun legislation with iron-clad guarantees given farmers and other gun owners, and the removal of all orders in council provisions.

The motion before the House would not go quite that far. It would go part of the way to ensure regulations are brought before the House and published and allow gun owners and others who want to comply with the law to know the regulations. The article continues:

The ideal, besides the welcome grandfather clause offered present gun owners, is that would-be gun owners should get a police certificate stating that the applicant has no police record and is not known to be mentally incompetent.

From that point, Crowe says, the applicant is then referred to a registered gun club or group of proficient local citizens (such as off-duty policemen). This would call for the completion of a recognized firearms course, thus constituting the cooling-off period demanded by the anti-gun lobby.

"However, the government would be out of the picture. And so would the bureaucrats. Hasn't Ottawa caught on to the fact that Canadians are utterly sick of officials sticking their noses into everything?" he asks.

The article summarizes what many Canadians feel. The government intervenes too much in our ordinary businesses and lives. Frankly, when the government does not listen to representations people make on legislation, democracy suffers. Parliament faces a crisis, and the public feels ever more that the politicians in Ottawa forget the people they are supposed to serve in their constituencies. The wishes of constituents are not translated into action taken by the House of Commons. That the provisions of this bill were not fully examined in committee is a clear demonstration of that fact. If democracy, parliament and our system of government are to survive, politicians on all sides must listen to the people. Therefore, I regret that those whom this legislation will affect particularly were not given the chance to appear before the committee in order to place their views on record.

The government's manner of proceeding was clearly evident in its approach to the metric conversion legislation. Rumour has it that the government will buckle under, come to its senses, heed our suggestions and remove from Bill C-23 the provision concerning hectares. We said in January that this provision should be removed. The government said we were filibustering. We were not. We were fighting for the people of Canada then, and we are trying to do the same at present.

I point out that after the hon. member for Crowfoot crossed the floor of the House, the government tried to force this measure through on three different occasions. I thought the hon. member, on behalf of the farmers of Canada, opposed metric conversion. Be that as it may, I am glad the government, after this long and difficult fight in the House of Commons, is at last willing to sit down and negotiate with the opposition. If they had been wise enough to read and follow some of the first speeches on this legislation, they would have found our acceptance of the bill that time had they withdrawn the provision of the hectare which is very offensive to farmers, particularly those in western Canada.

● (1630)

The amendment advanced by my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary North, is worthy of consideration. Cer-

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

tainly, it would improve the workings of the bill. It would allay many of the fears expressed by Canadians across the country, particularly those who will be directly affected by the legislation. I hope even at this late stage the minister will see fit to accept this motion. Perhaps we might then be able to help him in some way in getting this legislation through. Failing that, we might be here debating this bill until October or even November. Someone in this parliament has to speak out for, I would not say the silent majority but a substantial majority in this country who find this bill offensive in many ways.

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand why the minister who supposedly represents justice in Canada does not recognize it when he meets it face to face. It is inconceivable that a minister would try to railroad legislation through the highest chamber in Canada that not only is unacceptable to a large number of people but is not necessary. It is absolutely unnecessary for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) to act in the unorthodox manner in which he has with this bill and the one previous to it. Members on this side of the House would co-operate with him in bringing in favourable legislation that would be for the good of all people. However, the minister has signified that he has no intention of co-operating. I do not know how he thinks he will get this legislation through the House, when it does not meet with the approval of a large number of Canadians.

I commend the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) for bringing in this amendment. I am sure it will have the support of all clear-thinking, honest members of parliament who wish to represent their people well. We have to consider whether parliament is here to serve the people or whether the government intends to have the people serve parliament. I must impress upon this House that many governments throughout the world have collapsed as a result of adopting the policies upon which the present government has embarked. I refer to imposing itself to such a degree on large masses of Canadian people that eventually they will revolt. There is much disenchantment and frustration within the Canadian populace today because government is imposing legislation and regulations upon them which they do not want.

There are very few people in Canada today who do not want criminals brought under control. However, when you begin to regulate the law-abiding citizen into a state of frustration, you create problems for everybody, particularly the elected representatives of the people. I hope some members opposite will lend their support to those on this side in trying to bring a little common sense to the Minister of Justice. They should put pressure on him to make him change his mind so that we will not have to deal with legislation such as this.

As the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher) stated a few moments ago, people in Alberta are being charged as a result of regulations they knew nothing about. The roof fell in on them under conditions which they were not aware existed. That is what will happen with this legislation unless it is amended as proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North. Unless this amendment is carried, people will be charged under regulations put forward by order in council of which