

Measures Against Crime

other game affect urban violence? How will requiring a gun collector to obtain a licence for his gun collection have any effect on the muggings or assaults in the dark alleys of our major cities? How will licensing the members of a gun club or shooting federation possibly have any effect on the incidence of armed robbery?

This law will require the statements of two guarantors before an applicant will be able to obtain a gun licence. This should not be a problem for any normal, law-abiding person; but what possible effect can it have on controlling the psychotics and mentally unbalanced individuals in society? How can owner licensing prevent a normal and well balanced individual from shooting a relative or neighbour in a fit of passion during a period of temporary insanity?

This bill makes provision for the establishment of a licensing officer, one of whose functions it seems will be to see that gun licenses are not given to undesirable people. This is absurd. The function of a licensing officer cannot be any more than a bureaucratic function. He should not be given the power, the authority, and the responsibility to make a judgment about something as important and as personal as one's character. This is something which only a psychologist or psychiatrist is adequately trained and competent to do.

This evening I have tried to give some of the reasons why I am opposed to the gun licensing provisions contained in this criminal law amendment bill, Bill C-83. I cannot believe that the defects inherent in any system of gun control or gun owner licensing are not apparent to the government. I cannot believe that the government really believes in the effectiveness of gun control laws. Yet here we have what is in effect a new gun law mixed in with other measures which may be very effective in controlling crime. These include new provisions for the treatment of dangerous offenders, changes for the handling of prison inmates, provisions for establishing special crime inquiries by the provinces, amendments to the wire-tapping laws which might make them more effective in investigating organized crime, and some proposals for the prevention of crime.

I support most of these measures, as do many of my colleagues on this side. But I cannot support these new gun control provisions which establish a new gun law in Canada. In the circumstances, all these proposals being grouped together in this one bill, C-83, opposition to the bill means that one must oppose what may be very worthwhile measures to combat crime. Support for this bill means that one must support an unnecessary, unworkable, and ineffective gun law, which I am unable to do. I therefore support the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) calling for the gun control provisions to be separated from Bill C-83 and treated as a new law in a new bill.

In conclusion I say that the deviousness of the government on this legislation is totally unacceptable to our party. The gun control provisions are the major and fundamental part of this legislation. They cannot be treated as just another crime prevention measure. They constitute a major revision of the criminal laws of our country. Gun control is far too important an issue to be treated this way, in this bill, by this government. I urge that the proposal of

[Mr. Masniuk.]

the hon. member for Calgary North be considered and that the gun law amendments be severed from Bill C-83 and incorporated in a new bill. Only in this way can this House clearly and forthrightly address itself to such a serious and important issue, one which has so many profound implications for the operation of the criminal justice system in our nation.

Mr. Ross Milne (Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, on May 28 last year, it was my sad responsibility to rise and inform this House about the tragic shooting which had just occurred at Brampton Centennial high school in my riding. In a few brief, shocking moments two people were killed; one a teacher, the other a 17-year-old student. Thirteen other young people were wounded, some so seriously that they were to endure long and painful periods of recovery. Indeed some of them still bear and will continue to bear the indelible physical reminder of this ordeal. Finally and equally tragically, the troubled assailant turned his highpowered rifle on himself, adding his own name to the tragic toll of that afternoon.

That was a terrible time for the bereaved, a most difficult time for the injured, and an emotional time for the people of Brampton and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who were shocked by the tragedy.

The Brampton tragedy and the later, equally tragic event in Ottawa served as a catalyst in the minds of citizens, police, and governments. It was felt that legislation must be forthcoming to deal more adequately with the increasing proliferation of guns, the rising crime rate involving guns, and the rising toll of domestic and domestic related gun killings.

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Over 25,000 people in the Brampton area took the time and effort to drive to the local radio station to sign a petition in support of more effective gun control legislation. I am sure all members were in receipt of letters from all over Canada in support of effective gun legislation. Following the tragedy last July, the coroner's jury charged with the responsibility of investigating the shooting made the following recommendations. If I may, I would like to read them into the record. I quote:

(i) We recommend raising the legal age to 18 years before one can obtain a hunting licence.

(ii) We recommend raising the legal age for a minor's permit from 14 to 16 years of age to be used only in the accompaniment of a person holding a valid licence.

(iii) We recommend requiring the purchaser of a rifle or shotgun to firstly obtain a gun licence which must be produced prior to the purchase of the firearm.

This licence should be issued solely by police departments upon receipt of documents stating the applicant's reason for desiring the licence, training courses taken and a brief certificate of health. The application should be then subject to police approval.

(iv) We recommend that this same licence be produced upon the purchase of ammunition.

(v) We recommend that the vendor record the sale of all firearms and ammunition.

(vi) We recommend that all offences involving firearms come under the Criminal Code and be dealt with severely.

(vii) We recommend that all firearms currently in households be securely locked up within the home.