

*Criminal Code*

gun control in Canada. When I speak of gun control I am talking about a measure to restrict the too easy availability of guns and bullets which lead to violent crime, especially armed robbery and murder. We know that Canadians are concerned about the level of violent crime in the country. If we in the House are genuine in taking that concern seriously, we will want to do something to prevent murders and armed robberies from taking place rather than relying on measures to be applied after the fact. If we are genuinely concerned about this serious problem we should concentrate on preventive measures and effective gun control is one of the most effective measures we could take. While there has been a decline in recent years in Canada of the total number of murders and the percentage of murders committed with guns, the rate is still too high. There are still too many crimes committed with guns.

If we look at the statistics, Mr. Speaker, we can see that an overwhelming percentage of murders are committed with guns. Guns are used far more often for homicide than any other instrument. I will refer to the most recent statistics available. In 1983 there were a total of 682 homicides in Canada and of those 224, that is 32.8 per cent, were committed with guns. The other means of committing murder fall way behind. Each constitutes less than 10 per cent. In 1982 the percentage was even higher, 37 per cent. Two-hundred and forty-eight of 670 homicides were committed with guns. Therefore, we can see that if we want to reduce the rate of murder we should concentrate on a preventive measure which is geared to the source of the problem, that is, guns.

When we look around the world the evidence shows beyond a reasonable doubt that where guns are less readily available the number of crimes committed with guns is lower. In Holland, Belgium, Britain, Scandinavia, France and Italy there are tough gun laws and low rates of crimes with guns. In Japan there is a very low rate of crimes with guns due to their strict gun laws. In the jurisdictions of the world where there is loose control of guns there is a high rate of murder and armed robbery with guns. Unfortunately, our neighbour to the south is the worst violator in the so-called modern developed countries. They have very loose gun laws and very high rates of murder with guns.

There was a report prepared for the Solicitor General in 1983 which followed a five-year study of the new gun laws introduced in 1978. The intention was to examine those new gun laws over a period of five years and evaluate their effectiveness. In 1983 they published this report entitled *Evaluation of the Canadian Gun Control Legislation: Final Report 1983*. It comes to the conclusion that stricter gun laws have led to a lower rate of crimes with guns. I have a clipping from the *Montreal Gazette* dated August 20, 1983 in which it is pointed out that gun control legislation has restrained the use of firearms in robberies and homicides. I could refer to a lot of other examples.

I can remember when I first came to Parliament. A particular occurrence in Ottawa led me to introduce one Bill after another to bring about stricter control of guns. A young, mentally upset high school student went to a sporting goods

store on Sparks Street and bought a shotgun. In those days a firearms acquisition certificate was not required. There were no controls. One could go to any department store or sporting goods store and buy a rifle or shotgun. That is what this youth did and then he went back to his high school, began shooting at random, and killed several students in the school.

Guns are too readily available in homes where there is a history of alcoholism, drug addiction and family disputes. I have a report from Montreal of a case where a son killed his father with the father's gun after the father had threatened the mother and a younger brother. In examining this case the coroner said that if guns were not so readily available they may have ended up hitting each other, but it would not have ended with people being killed.

Also, the way in which guns are stored without great care has very often led to the theft of guns and the use of them by others in crime. I have a story from the *Montreal Gazette* of October 24, 1984 telling of an incident in which the gun of a security guard, a powerful .357 magnum revolver, was taken from him. Many security guards are elderly and not well trained. His gun was taken from him by a group of young people and used in an armed robbery in which they killed a police officer. In the United States there are very loose gun control laws and some states have hardly any gun control laws whatsoever. In that country, guns have killed 440,000 people since the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. In addition to that, over 1.7 million people were wounded by gunfire in crimes involving guns. Approximately 2.7 million people were robbed at gunpoint.

Many of us heard about the incident at the McDonald's restaurant in San Diego in July of 1984 where a mentally imbalanced young man—not a career gangster or criminal—who had never committed a crime with a gun before, took the readily available gun in his home, announced to his wife that he was going downtown to hunt human beings, went into a McDonald's restaurant and, by firing at random, killed 21 individuals. That was because the gun and the bullets were readily available.

As I said, the evidence shows that in those jurisdictions of the world where there are strict gun laws there are lower rates of murder and other crimes committed with guns. The polls in Canada show that a very high percentage of Canadians favour stricter gun laws. Every time a poll is taken once every two years we see that 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the people favour stricter gun laws. That includes every region of the country, including the prairies, British Columbia and the Maritimes. Despite the fact that over 80 per cent of the people in the country favour that, a very well organized and well financed gun lobby in this country, which represents a minority of Canadians is able to prevail upon Members of Parliament not to enact the stricter gun laws we need.

• (1740)

I must admit that we have made advances and I have been instrumental in helping us to move forward somewhat. However, every time we attempt to do something there is a