

I appreciate being recognized and allowed to express these concerns this early in the debate on the motion today. I should add that the minister is well aware of my concerns. She does not share all of them, but she has been available and she has listened. I am very conscious of the intense feelings that exist toward the abuse of firearms. I am also aware that there are intense feelings toward the abuse of many substances, such as alcohol, drugs, and anything else that could cause potential disruption in our society.

The minister and this House are under intense pressure to legislate on the matter that is before us today. It is important that the legislation accomplish what is intended. It is important that it be understood and accepted by members of the general population. If it is not understood and accepted, they will not respect it. If there is no respect for the law, people will find a way to avoid it and get around it.

We as a country do not have the resources or the inclination to run a police state. We cannot go into every household in the country to enforce the law. Like all other concerned parliamentarians, I have relayed the concerns and questions that have been given to me to the minister. I know she has met with me and several others who like myself have legitimate concerns with the bill. I also know that she has heard from other people who support complete abolition of firearms.

I understand the difficulties and the questions, but we need to have legitimate, honest, law-abiding owners and users of firearms understand and accept the law if it is to work. It is true that some of the concerns they expressed might be exaggerated, but others are real.

In addition to specific items that I will get into in a few minutes, the major concern that I have heard is the amount of power that this act would give to regulation. People want to know who will be writing those regulations.

Those of us in the House who are more involved in this system and have got to know it, who understand how regulations are drafted, would perhaps have confidence that those regulations will be well balanced and well written.

However there is a lot of mistrust of politicians. Many people are resentful of regulations that are imposed on them to address a problem that they do not see as their

own. That is what they see us doing in this case. We are regulating good, honest, law-abiding citizens to prevent a problem that they see happening somewhere else.

This gets more complicated when we state that the power of regulation is going to be delegated to another body. Most people have enough trouble with us, and now they are concerned that some nameless, faceless group of well meaning people who will be given the power to set regulations that will affect their hobby, possibly their employment, and definitely their own legally purchased property.

I will get to some specific examples that my constituents have shared with me. In addition to letters from constituents, I am sure we have all received regular mailings from groups like the National Firearms Association. It is quite interesting that although in one of its recent publications the National Firearms Association says that it was not consulted when the act was drafted, the department says that it did meet with the National Firearms Association in August 1989 prior to drafting the legislation. That fact aside, the legislation has now been drafted and presented, and I think the National Firearms Association does represent people who deserve to be heard.

In reading some of its publications, it tends to be what might be called inflammatory. Perhaps it overstates some things and exaggerates its argument in certain cases. Some people seem to think you have to do that to make a point with politicians.

Debate in this House often leads itself to overstatement and occasionally even exaggeration. When dealing in this House, we have learned to look beyond the overstatement, beyond the exaggeration, and occasionally accept that within the rhetoric and overstatement there is often a grain of reason and a valid point. I think that holds for the National Firearms Association. It has some good suggestions. If we can get beyond some of its rather forceful statements, it is worth listening to.

One interesting fact gleaned from its pages is that members of the organization can get \$1 million in liability insurance to cover them while shooting for only \$4.50. At first it was just to cover them while shooting at ranges, but their positive experience allowed them to extend it to hunting as well. The fact that they can get

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