

*Government Orders*

Registration will enable us to record what arrives and track it to the point of sale into the hands of a lawful owner. Registration will enable us to stop the kind of leakage that now occurs, to reduce the incidence of people illegally selling that which is legally imported.

Along with other measures that the government proposes in relation to border controls, including enhanced inspection and enforcement, registration will enable us to address one of the two principal sources of guns for the criminal market in the underground.

As to the second source of guns, those stolen from lawful owners, last year approximately 3,800 firearms were lost or stolen by those who lawfully own them in Canada. In the years since 1974 a cumulative total of 65,000 firearms have been stolen or lost and not recovered.

What does this have to do with registration? The police contend, and I accept it as a matter of logic, that registration which obligates each of us to record the fact of our ownership of firearms will imbue the owners with a heightened sense of responsibility to comply with laws already on the books mandating safe storage. These might involve locking the triggers, keeping the ammunition separate, or keeping the firearms themselves in a locked case.

With compliance with those safe storage requirements the incidence of firearms being stolen, of someone breaking and entering into a person's house and finding a shotgun leaning against the closet wall or a handgun in the bedside table will diminish. A second important source for criminals and guns will be addressed.

There is more. Registration will reduce crime and better equip the police to deal with crime in Canadian society by providing them with information they often need to do their job. Let me provide a practical example for my colleagues in the House.

Two weeks ago in Victoria when I met with provincial and territorial ministers of justice, we talked about a number of amendments to the Criminal Code that might make it more effective. One of them had to do with criminal harassment or so-called stalking.

It was suggested an improvement might be to add to the panoply of penalties the court can impose when convicting a person of criminal harassment, an order prohibiting them from possessing firearms because we would be dealing now with someone who had been convicted of a crime which too often leads to violence.

That suggestion was made in the context of ministers, not all of whom agreed with universal registration. But when the question was asked: Assuming that we have an order against someone made by the court forbidding them from possessing firearms because they have been convicted of criminal harassment, how will we enforce that order? How will we know that all of the person's firearms have been surrendered? How will the

police know what firearms to look for when they arrive to enforce the order?

• (1225)

Mandatory registration will provide a basis upon which the police can enforce that kind of order, which is commonly made in the courts when people have been convicted of such offences.

I have said in the House in the past and rely heavily upon the fact that preponderantly the police are in favour of universal registration. We can quibble about individual officers. I know it is not unanimous. However, the chiefs have been vigorously pressing for this legislation for many years.

The Canadian Police Association, through its executive, is supportive of these measures. Police forces and boards across the country are encouraging us to proceed with this legislation. I know there are police officers who see it differently, but preponderantly the police forces are in favour of these measures.

Victims groups, including CAVEAT, urge us to have universal registration. Priscilla de Villiers, the president of CAVEAT, lost a daughter in a dreadful tragedy. She was murdered by a man in respect of whom the police had investigations concerning firearms.

In the Jonathon Yeo case there was an inquest into Nina de Villiers' death. After spending months looking at the facts of that case, the jury at that inquest recommended universal registration of all firearms. Priscilla de Villiers has spoken out strongly in favour of that measure, explaining her conviction that it will help the police to deal with crime.

The point is broader still. Registration will assist us to deal with the scourge of domestic violence. Statistics demonstrate that every six days a woman is shot to death in Canada, almost always in her home, almost always by someone she knows, almost always with a legally owned rifle or shotgun. This is not a street criminal with a smuggled handgun at the corner store. This is an acquaintance, a spouse or a friend in the home.

What does this have to do with registration? Domestic violence by its very nature is episodic and incremental. Typically, somewhere along the line the court has made an order barring the aggressor from possessing firearms. When the police try to enforce that order, just as in the case of stalking, they do not know whether they have been successful or not. They do not know what firearms are there.

When firearms are registered, if it is necessary for a person to register and show proof of registration to buy ammunition, as it will be, the police will know what firearms are there. The police will be able to enforce those orders and lives will be saved.

Suicides and accidents provide another example. Last year, of the 1,400 people who died by firearms in Canada, 1,100 were suicides. I know there are those who say that suicide by its